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St. Colman's: a Case Study in Teachers'
Perspectives. History Teachers in Context.

Ailish O'Boyle, M.A., B.A., H.D.E.

M7151574

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Abstract

This case study researches teachers' perspectives within St. Colman's, a large voluntary secondary school in rural Ireland. It investigates History teachers as a group of subject teachers within this context. 'Perspectives' are located within the interpretive sociology of symbolic interactionism. The study integrates historical, micropolitical, biographical and epistemological contexts, in a way which constructs the school's history and the working lives of its teachers. The story's central theme is how teacher perspectives are the product of the symbiotic relationship between their careers and the school organisation. *History teachers' biographies provide an additional context for examining the role of the subject, the subject department and the curriculum in the formation of perspectives.*

The thesis is divided into ten chapters. Chapters one and two establish this case study as an ethnographic investigation and set out the structure and methodology underpinning the research.

The empirical data is presented in two strands, moving from the general to the specific. The first strand, which comprises chapters three, four and five, explores the origin, development and dynamic of teachers' sub cultures, professional status and identities. Beginning with the wider school organisation, the study moves to the social networks of the staffroom and shows how group culture is the product of teacher socialisation, shared experiences and micropolitical orientations that have their origins

in the history of the school and the 'social dramas' experienced in times of change. The second strand; chapters six, seven and eight, is a more focused examination of History teachers' careers. The nature and role of the History department in shaping teachers' identities and status is explored, while biography, life cycle and career experiences are linked to teachers' craft knowledge as expressed in their perspectives on *history as a subject and their pedagogy in the classroom.*

The case study concludes that teachers' perspectives are defined in the context of their careers, which are shaped by changing school structures and processes, the development of teacher sub-cultures and the competing demands made on them as professionals. While their identities are still anchored in their role as teachers, they adopt coping strategies to manage their careers. This can give rise to a self image of disillusionment, and alienation from the school organisation. The study recommends that while greater attention must be paid to cultural leadership in schools, teachers must also be empowered through ideological involvement and *professional development to take charge of their own careers.*

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Chapter One

Introduction

Origins of the Research

The origin of this project lies with my professional studies with the Open University. When I began these studies in 1993, my career had reached a critical juncture. Since leaving university in 1972 with a degree and a higher diploma in education, I worked as a teacher in St. Colman's, a voluntary secondary school in the north west of Ireland. Over these twenty one years, I had married, raised four children, got promotion and experienced significant changes in education at both central government and school level. Yet, I was suffering from a motivation crisis (Cole, 1985; Webb, 1985) in that teaching had become a routinised activity and further promotional opportunities or career moves seemed unlikely. Now in my early forties, with fewer competing demands on my personal time, I began to reassess the direction and meaning of my career (Sikes et al., 1985). Professional development in the form of postgraduate studies in education was the answer that gave meaning to my daily work. These studies enabled me to focus on my teaching career and personal biography, on schools as educational organizations, and on classrooms and curriculum.

As a History teacher, I was also interested in the History curriculum and the context in which it is taught. I conducted a small scale investigation of the History curriculum, which involved interviews with, and observation of a colleague at work in the classroom. From the experience of this research, which I linked to the research literature, and through workshop discussions with other teachers, I adopted a more reflexive

approach to my classroom teaching and my career. I realized there was no single perspective on teaching; rather it was shaped by the interactions of the teacher's personal and professional life, and further refined by the context of the school and the classroom.

The professional benefits gained from this limited collaborative research experience fired my enthusiasm for a larger project involving all the History teachers in my own school. This undertaking began as a small scale pilot project, investigating *three History teachers within a department context* to establish their perspectives on the History curriculum. During the pilot work, I found that they were as much interested in talking about the school context as their subject area or their pedagogy in the classroom. They constantly referred to staff relationships and to how teachers, in particular staffroom groupings, would view situations. I was already familiar with Ball's (1987) work on the micropolitics of the school and I could relate much of his findings to our experiences. This reawakened my own interest in micropolitics and a belief that History teachers could not be investigated in isolation from other teachers, or the context in which they worked. As the research progressed, I found that teacher perspectives were influenced by past events as well as current situations. Therefore, I redefined my research focus to include historical, biographical and micro-political dimensions of teachers' careers. In this way, I set out to enable teachers give voice to the totality of their experiences within a particular school setting.

Aims and rationale of the research.

This case study examines the following themes as they relate to teachers in St. Colman's, and specifically to History teachers within a department and classroom context.

- a) What are the social, historical, micropolitical and professional contexts that shape teachers' perspectives?
- b) What are the biographical and workplace experiences of History teachers that shape their identities and careers?
- c) How do History Teachers perceive and practise their professional craft knowledge within the subject department and classroom context?

Goodson (1992a) argues that:

teachers' life studies should, where possible, provide not only a '*narrative of action*' but also a history or '*genealogy of context*'. (p. 240)

This view supports earlier suggestions by Dollard (1949), Goodson (1988a) and Smith (1984), that research must have a historical as well as a situational dimension. They claim it is important to explore how the history of the organisation, its environment and the biography of the individual are intertwined, so that there is a rich contextual background against which one can analyse the teaching career.

Any investigation on the context of teaching should, I believe, also require a reflection on the micropolitical processes that run through school decisionmaking and interpersonal relationships. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (1997) point to the virtual absence of studies in micropolitics in teacher education. I believe that, by studying a school from a micropolitical perspective, we can address this possible failure to acknowledge that power struggles, vested interests and ideological dispute exist in schools, and that this is not necessarily a symptom of dysfunction, but if managed skillfully can be, as Baldrige (1971)

and Ball (1987) suggest, a healthy dynamic. It can also show the deleterious effects on teacher morale if power in an organisation is used in such a way that alienates, divides and weakens teachers' professionalism. Because the research relates to

the pragmatic concerns of the institution,

(Bell, 1993, 2nd edn, p.57)

it will also help school Management Boards and Principals understand how teachers think and act individually and collectively, and how they change and develop during their careers. This awareness of school culture and subcultures is crucial, according to Sikes (1992), if schools wish to introduce reforms because

it is through these cultures that change is mediated,
interpreted and realised. (p. 43)

Goodson (1991a) and Goodson and Mangan (1995) claim that to understand how the teacher teaches, one must understand the person the teacher is, and the links between h/her philosophy of education and personal lifestyle. Goodson (1992a) claims that policy makers can get a better understanding of teachers' perceptions and practice, by studying teachers' life histories and the critical incidents that punctuate their life cycle.

Research should be beneficial to the participants as well as to other teachers, educationalists and policy makers. Rudduck (1988) sees biography as fundamental to professional development and the reform process. Teachers, she suggests, by reflecting on their experience, can identify the hurt and frustrations they have experienced in their careers. Butt et al. (1990) believe the use of autobiography strengthens commitment, because it encourages teachers to identify the

cardinal influences that shaped their careers, and build a personal bridge to the context of teaching.

That is why teachers' life histories set against the history of their workplace can enable them to understand and clarify their own values, beliefs and behaviour. I believe that I and my colleagues, through participating in this research project, will also think and reflect more on our professional activities, and understand professional problems in the historical, career and situational contexts in which we work. It can, therefore, be an effective form of professional development.

Johnson (1988) claims that reform can best be effected if we better understand how teachers experience teaching in their own schools. He argues that if we accept that teaching can only be reformed from within, then we must be aware of teachers' views, the appeal and satisfaction in teaching, or the frustrations that make teachers consider leaving the profession. This case study, by exploring teachers' perspectives within a holistic framework that recognises the importance of the teacher's voice, can highlight the problems and opportunities within teaching and promote a concept of professionalism based on the realities of teachers' working lives.

Shulman (1986) emphasises 'pedagogical content knowledge' as the basis for teachers' professional recognition. Teachers, he claims, have an expert and unique knowledge base attributable to scientific theory formulated from ongoing research findings. However, in my teaching experience, which is supported by research (Hoyle and John, 1995; Lortie, 1975; Truman, 1992), I found that teachers do not look to research as a guide or *rationale for their work*. *There is a suspicion that theory evolves from scientific educational principles that do not seek to understand the reality of the teachers' lives* (Carr & Kemmis, 1983), and the paucity of qualitative research in Irish

educational journals on the careers and classroom experiences of teachers, adds to this deficit in teacher education. Therefore, research modelled on Calderhead (1987), Connolly and Clandinin (1990) and Elbaz (1983) which examines teachers' professional and personal practical knowledge, or what Brown and McIntyre (1993) and Cooper and McIntyre (1996) call craft knowledge, should have relevance to teachers' practical experience, and complement existing research theory.

Although knowledge in most second level schools is differentiated through subjects, the school subject is under-investigated. Ball (1987), Cooper (1984), Goodson (1983, 1988b, 1993, 3rd edn., 1994), Hammersley and Hargreaves (1983), have underlined significant differences between subjects, in how they have evolved, how their knowledge content is defined, selected and disseminated. They also show that there are various traditions within subjects, while Ball and Lacey (1980), Datnow (1998), Lacey (1977) and Siskin (1994), demonstrate how they can become arenas of contestation between interest groups and subgroups as they seek to win public and school approval for the subject's rationale, its content and its pedagogy.

History is a good example of how a subject is the product of negotiation and compromise between two traditions: *The Old History*, which is based on a body of knowledge, and the *New History*, which is a synthesis of content and process. While History in England and Wales is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum at 'Key Stage 3', there is a declining uptake at G.C.S.E level (White, 1996) and concerns exist about its future (Brown, 1997). A similar pattern emerges in Northern Ireland (Logan, 1991) and the Irish Republic, where it is a compulsory subject only in Voluntary Secondary schools and its decline has gone from over 60% of participating students at

Leaving Certificate in the 1960's, to just over 23% in 1998 (Coombes,1998).

Most research is concentrated on how History should be taught. Apart from Ball's (1987), Mc Neil's (1986) and Siskin's (1994) work, which has touched on how History or social studies teachers became embroiled in micro-politics, as they sought to defend their subject, there is little qualitative research on History teachers, their perspective on their subject, their experience within a department setting, or their careers within schools. As History faces greater competition in Irish schools, I believe it is important that the perspectives of History teachers be recorded, so that the findings could make a contribution, however small, to the professional development of History teachers and the History curriculum itself.

Issues for consideration

In developing a theoretical framework to examine teachers' perspective within an Irish context, it is important to acknowledge the differences between the educational systems and careers of British and Irish teachers. Until the 1970's, the history, structure, management and clientele of Irish post primary schools differed from those of the British state system. Irish schools were predominantly Church owned and controlled, yet state funded, with a centrally determined curriculum. Professor Walsh, University of Limerick, maintains that religious ownership and the ban on lay Principals meant that Irish teachers did not develop within the management side of education in comparison to teachers in other countries (Murphy, 1993). The teaching profession was largely conservative, middle class, more highly respected and paid than their British counterparts (Drudy and Lynch, 1993). Since the 1970's, Free Education led to greater state intervention, with the development of Comprehensive and Community schools. The pace of change is, however, much

slower than in Britain, and Church owned Voluntary Secondary schools still predominate (Coolahan, 1981; O' Flaherty, 1992). While they are considered more prestigious and selective than the state schools, there is ongoing competition between the two systems for pupil numbers, curriculum initiatives and increased funding (Drudy and Lynch, 1993). Catholic Voluntary schools are entitled to state funding without financial transparency or accountability (O'Flaherty, 1992), but, as they receive less financial support than state schools, they claim they are forced to compete with them on unequal terms (Duffy, 1987).

When the Catholic Hierarchy proposed Boards of Management for Secondary schools in 1972, the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (A.S.T.I.) resisted the proposals, on the grounds that they would take away the personal relationships and sense of responsibility which the existing Principals /Managers had with their staff. There were also fears that Boards would be dominated by people motivated more by political and religious considerations than educational principles (O'Flaherty, 1992). Unlike the Boards, set up in Britain under the Education Act, 1980, and reformed in 1986/1988 to enhance accountability (Farrell and Law, 1999), the ASTI suspected that Boards were not devised to democratise education, but to retain religious control of schools at a time of declining vocations. When Boards were finally established in 1984, they were accepted as an inevitable development of educational change. Teachers and parents were each entitled to elect two of the eight members, while the Trustees appoint four, including the Chairperson (O' Flaherty, 1992).

Further proposals for rational management emerged in Ireland in the Green Paper (D.E.S., 1992), which envisaged the Principal as chief executive working under the direction of a Board of Management. In consultation with the staff and approved by the

Board, h/she would produce a school plan, setting out aims and objectives, with outcomes available to parents, the Inspectorate and other interested parties. These proposals now form part of the Education Act, 1998, (D.E.S., 1998a) although the concept of chief executive is abandoned and greater emphasis now attaches to the Principal's role as instructional leader. O'Tuathaigh (1995) has commented on how this language of managerialism, more appropriate to Engineering and Industry with its reference to 'quality assurance', 'quality control', 'audits' etc. is creeping into Irish education.

In Britain, Ball (1987) believes managerialism removes the definition of the school

entirely from the hands of teachers, (p.267)

while Brehony (1994) points to the managerialist perspective on governing Boards, which seek to

regulate, discipline and conduct surveillance upon teachers. (p.54)

Irish teachers are therefore anxious to avoid and resist what they perceive as the worst features of the English and Welsh model, particularly the OFSTED school inspection system, the publication of league tables, and the administrative burden of classroom and pupil records (Pollack, 1998).

Pollack (1998) claims that the absence of a 'mechanistic' career structure (Lacey, 1983) with rigid hierarchies, promotion, specialisms and rules gives Irish teachers a strong sense of identification with their schools and makes them generally happier than their English counterparts. Teachers in voluntary secondary schools are usually university graduates and incline towards 'dual specialism' rather than the single subject specialism common to the British system. Because promotion, to

all posts, except Head and Deputy Head, is based primarily on seniority, rather than suitability, the career line of the classroom teacher is a gentle incline, rather than a steep ascent (Lortie, 1975). As the administrative structure of the schools does not include any formalised department system with appointed Heads, subject teachers cannot aspire to any upward movement in formal status, remuneration or power (Drudy and Lynch, 1993).

Teacher Conferences are a good barometer of teacher perspectives on the present difficulties and challenges ahead. The Education Act, 1998, whole school inspection, new management structures, curricular change, salary structures, job insecurity, the declining status and public image of the teacher, stress and burn out induced by serious indiscipline and bullying from pupils are issues dominating current debate (Flynn, 2000; Pollack, 1998). Similar challenges faced British teachers in the nineteen seventies and eighties, particularly arising from the Education Reform Act, 1988, which altered the basic power structure system in education by formalising the employer employee relationship and denying teachers a voice in the management of change (Horder, 1995). The articulation of teacher perspectives on the crisis in teaching led to a better understanding of teachers' concerns and prompted educational researchers like Fullan and Hargreaves (1991), Goodson (1992a) and Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) to conclude that the way forward for teachers is through the formation of professional and collaborative communities. In Ireland, politicians, parents and educationalists have joined in the debate, calling for increased technical support for schools, combined with staff development and evaluation (Bruton, 2000).

Theoretical framework

Perspectives.

In choosing 'perspectives' as the overarching concept shaping my work, I was influenced by Lacey (1977) and Woods (1983), who see 'perspectives' as a framework of ideas which give rise to beliefs and attitudes through which people find meaning to interpret their world. They claim that perspectives are put into action through strategies, a concept they use to describe ways of achieving goals. They also see perspectives as permitting the portrayal of circumstances outside as well as inside the school, which affect the context of teaching. Woods (1983) claims that perspectives are situation determined, and are

based on certain assumptions that are culturally specific and context bound. (p.8).

He also recommends that the history of the school and of its locality should be investigated, so that all the links in the chain comprising the school's culture and processes can be fully understood.

(Becker et al., 1961) and Janisek (1977) offer a more inclusive definition of 'perspectives' to include actions as well as ideas. (Becker et al., 1961) define the concept as

a co-ordinated set of ideas and actions a person uses in dealing with some problematic situation-----in response to a specific set of institutional processes.

(p.34).

Janisek (1977) sees it as a

reflective, socially defined interpretation of experience that serves as a basis for subsequent action----- a combination of beliefs, intentions, interpretations and behaviour that interact continually.

(Pajares,1992, p.314).

I use 'perspectives' broadly, to include teachers' beliefs, attitudes, ideas, actions and interactions in a variety of school contexts, which are historical, cultural, biographical, interpersonal and micro political. These concepts are popular within symbolic interactionism, a research paradigm which underlines people as interpreters of their own and others' situations, actions and counteractions, which are grounded in everyday life.

This paradigm is used by Acker (1999), Ball (1981), Burgess (1983), Pollard (1985) and Woods (1983) to find out about teachers' working lives. I share Acker's belief that the focus of this research tradition is

on the collective and negotiated nature of perspectives developed by actors as they live through shared situations. (p.18)

These perspectives relate to a variety of contexts and concepts, such as school cultures and subcultures within staffrooms and subject departments, careers, identities, strategies, professional and classroom processes. Therefore, it is important to interrogate the frameworks within which these concepts will be operationalised in my study.

Contexts

Schools provide different formal and informal contexts, or what Goffman (1959) described as the front regions and back regions. The traditional emphasis on formal context led to a view of schools as rational, predictable organisations with clear goals, division of power and labour (Musgrave, 1968). Apart from Keddie's (1971) '*Classroom Knowledge*', which made a distinction between teacher context and educational context, there was little emphasis on school context. By the 1970's this notion of rationality was rejected and schools were viewed as 'loosely coupled' or 'anarchic organisations' (Cohen et al., 1972; Weick, 1976). However, these models still did not make sufficiently close links between the formal and interactive structures of schools, in a way that recognised their complexity (Bell, 1988).

Sociologists like Ball (1987), Burgess (1983), Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970), Nias (1989) and Sikes et al. (1985) focused on the back regions as negotiated contexts, where situations are constructed, defined and interpreted according to *one's cultural perspective*. The notion of multiple contexts was identified by Mc Laughlin et al. (1990) and Rosenholtz (1989), who investigated how political, socio-economic and societal factors combined with school organisation, culture, subject departments and pupil clientele impacted on teachers. Like Goodson (1992b), these researchers argued that schools are not a given structure, but a product of negotiation and accommodation between teachers, pupils and administrators. They also claim that two teachers in the same school could experience different realities and effect different outcomes, so context has to be subject to comprehensive analysis, where age, gender, class, professional training and socialisation are pertinent to how teachers feel and think about their work.

This study uses context as a wide term to include any situation, experience, or influence, past or present at a societal, organisational, biographical and interpersonal level that influences the perspectives of teachers. While this study introduces the formal context in which I locate teachers' careers, its primary focus is on the back regions of St. Colman's, because they allow one to gain insight into school culture and inter group relationships.

The staffroom and the subject department are identified in the research literature as contexts, where cultures develop and perspectives are formed. Different images have been presented of school staffrooms. Acker (1999) and Nias et al. (1989) see the staffrooms of primary schools as fostering collegiality and communality. Burgess (1983), Little (1990) and Woods (1984a) portray secondary school staffrooms as places of retreat and congeniality, with laughter, jokes, cynicism, and grumbles, while Burke (1985) presents an image of busyness and snatched conversation within a warm, collaborative environment. Riseborough (1981) in his research on comprehensivisation, documented how the staffroom became polarised, as those who suffered career disappointment and couldn't identify with the ideology of the school formed powerful cliques or subversive sub-cultures. Ball (1987) views the staffroom as a

near direct reflection of the micro -political structure of the institution.--- social relations will almost inevitably bear the marks of the particular political history of the institution. (p.213)

Ball and Lacey (1980), Burgess (1983), Goodson and Marsh (1996), Lacey (1977), Little (1982), and Siskin (1994) attach more importance to the subject department than the staffroom, as being responsible for subject socialisation, the development

of social, micropolitical and professional relationships, teachers' professional status and identities. Gutierrez (1998) argues that no department is completely homogeneous, while different departments have different operating dynamics and organisational structures. Siskin (1994) developed a typology of subject departments, which focuses on leadership qualities. Early and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) and Goodson and Marsh (1996) have explored the department's administrative functions, while Johnson (1990) and Siskin (1994) suggest that spatial boundaries not only differentiate subjects and their teachers, but can engender stronger loyalties than the school organisation. Ball (1987), Siskin (1994) and Sparkes (1987) examine the ideological factions and power struggles within and between departments, which determine their status or survival.

Because the department and the staffroom provide opportunities for interaction, they are an appropriate area for research within the sociological frameworks used by these researchers. Their analyses suggest that teachers construct their own culture, involving a socialisation process, which Lortie (1975), Nias (1989), Riseborough (1981), Sikes et al. (1985) and Woods (1983) claim, usually occurs within reference groups.

Reference groups

These researchers have examined reference groups as sources of identity formation and maintenance. Nias (1989) in her research on primary school teachers, argues that the reference group determines what information individuals receive and the interpretations put on it. People's reality is shaped through interactions with other group members. Once one has internalised the perspective of a particular group, it becomes a *frame of reference*, which is brought to bear on all new situations. Ball (1987) sees reference groups as political entities and uses Baldridge's (1971) typology to describe their

characteristics. The officials hold formal power, the activists fight to influence decision making, the attentives are sideline watchers who only get involved in hot issues, while the apathetics are totally indifferent.

Mac an Ghaill (1992) uses a typology of three groups, which embraces Ball's political entities, but also differentiates these groups by their approach to curriculum issues. The Professionals in Mac an Ghaill's work tend to be older members of staff with management positions, who promote subject based, common sense approach to learning, opposition to theory, are authoritarian in approach to pupils, but with a strong sense of loyalty to colleagues. The Old Collectivists have a strong sense of 'them' and 'us' in relations with the Principal, support comprehensive education and pastoral care, but are ambivalent about curriculum innovation. They are trade union activists, but have fading ideological significance within the school. The Entrepreneurs are pragmatic in their pedagogical approach, but are very supportive of curricular initiatives. They have a high school profile and are career oriented.

Because St. Colman's has a large staff, an examination of the typologies outlined above will be needed to establish the socialisation process and cultural identities of staffroom groups.

Culture

Culture is a multifaceted concept that enables researchers to understand the relationship between school processes and structures. It includes the concerns of teachers about occupation, issues of identity, status, professionalism, power and influence, subject content, or pedagogy. It is embedded in teacher interaction of talk and shared values, beliefs and experience, embodied through rituals, symbols and ceremonies (Deal, 1985), which Deal and Kennedy (1983) describe as

the way we do things around here. (p.4)

Culture is deeply implicit, but not monolithic. It manifests itself through sub-cultures and counter cultures, which Ball (1987), Goodson (1992a/b), Hargreaves (1986), Sikes et al. (1985) and Weber and Mitchell (1996) claim are rooted in history and can change, or be modified by teachers' lives and experiences. Ball (1987), Hargreaves (1994), Hargreaves and Macmillan (1995), Hoyle (1988), and Nias et al. (1989) have identified different elements of organisational culture.

Hargreaves (1994) describes 'Balkanisation' as a fragmented culture, which is marked by the existence of sub-groups with distinct characteristics, that are defined by particular patterns of interrelationships among teachers. The groups have low permeability, in that teachers belong exclusively, or predominantly, to one group more than any other, and what teachers learn and believe in one is quite different from what teachers experience in another. Balkanization is also defined by stability in the membership of groups, within which, deep social and professional attachments develop. Differences in power and status also emerge between groups because, as Datnow (1998), and Hargreaves (1994) demonstrate, they have the potential to promote either teacher entrenchment or professional growth.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) and Nias et al. (1989) have identified collaborative cultures as promoting openness, shared meaning, reflexive feedback and professional growth. Ball (1987), Blase (1988a/b, 1989, 1993), Datnow (1998) and Hoyle (1988) investigate the 'dark side' of organisational cultures which Hoyle claims constitutes 'the domain of micropolitics'.

Micro-politics.

Hoyle (1988) states that

micro-politics embraces those strategies by which individuals and groups in organisational contexts seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests. (p. 256)

He claims the main elements of micropolitics consist of interests, coalitions, strategies and power. He ignores conflict, but Bacharach (1988), Ball (1987), Blase (1989), and Hardy et al. (1988) see conflict as an essential dynamic of micropolitics, and maintain that conflict arises in schools because their structure creates goal diversity and dissensus. Conflict, they argue, is precipitated by factors such as status, dissatisfaction with existing allocation of resources, rewards and prestige. When these conditions exist, teachers will form coalitions or interest groups to pursue common goals.

Ball (1987) identifies three types of interest pursued by individuals or groups, which, if they clash, will make conflict inevitable. Vested interests, he claims relate to material reward, resources, promotion and territory, while self interest relates to self image and identity. Ideological interests relate to fundamental political or philosophical positions. Ball (1987) acknowledges that it is difficult to separate the different types of interests because they are an expression of the teacher's identity, but he maintains that ideological interests become most significant in the decision making process and can be a source of conflict throughout a teacher's career.

Ideology is a problematic concept. Hammersley (1981) sees ideology as a product of particular situations that may have no implications for beliefs and actions. Grace (1978), Sharp and

Green (1975) and Woods (1983) define it as a systematic set of beliefs and values modelled on one's view of society, the function of education and being a 'proper teacher' (Sikes, 1985), a concept, which, she suggests, is defined by the teacher's attitude to professionalism, appearance, relationships with colleagues and pupils, discipline and pedagogy. Ball (1987) suggests that decision making is underpinned by ideology and, while not all teachers are motivated by ideological beliefs and commitments, ideology often gives rise to fundamental differences between teachers and leads to conflict. These researchers view ideology as a product of socialisation, professional training, situational and life experiences, therefore, it is a useful concept to employ in this case study to describe an ingrained set of beliefs, values and attitudes, which lie at the heart of staffroom culture and contribute to teachers' perspectives

Hoyle (1988) claims that micropolitics is about strategies used by interest groups, and is more concerned with everyday interactions in schools than with formal procedures. Ball (1987) examines strategies of visibility, patronage, gossip, fatalism and ingratiation, and how they are used by organisational actors including teachers and Principals in the exercise of power. Ball (1987) and Datnow (1998) explore the politics of gender and the strategies used by male teachers that marginalise and disadvantage female teachers in promotions, collegiality and decision making. Blase (1988b) outlines a typology of protective strategies teachers use in their relations with Principals, ranging from acquiescence, accommodation, circumvention, sabotage, to passive resistance. Blase (1988a, 1989) also points to the use of promotional strategies to flatter or appease the Principal, or curtail h/her power. Ball (1987) and Blase (1988a) demonstrate how Principals, through practising a particular style of leadership

and control strategies, can stifle talk, stigmatize and isolate opponents, or bring out the best in teachers.

Ball (1987), Blase (1988a), Iannaccone and Lutz (1995), Kogan et al. (1984) and Malen (1995) suggest that, because the roles of Principal and teachers are constrained by local councils, parents' associations and Boards of Governance, they rely more on micro-political strategies than on the formal arenas of power to manage their careers and relationships in the workplace.

Power has a different meaning when applied to micropolitics than in formal arenas. Ball (1987) and Hoyle (1988) focus primarily on two aspects of power: authority and influence. To Hoyle, authority is the legally supported form of power, which involves the right to make decisions, and is supported by sanctions. Influence is the capacity to affect the actions of others without legal sanctions. Hoyle claims that micropolitics is more concerned with influence. Ball (1987) also gives power a wider conceptual meaning than that of formal authority. He claims:

it does not involve reference to position, but to performance, achievement and struggle. (p.25)

Ball (1987), Datnow (1998), Paechter (1993a) and Paechter and Head (1996b) document how power can be positive or repressive, fueling resistance, opposition and conflict. Power, they demonstrate, also involves bargaining, compromises, negotiations as well as threats, games and underhand dealing. Symbolic interactionists also see power relationships as fluid and contextual, as groups and individuals set out to define or redefine school realities. However, they claim that the Principal, as a 'critical reality definer' (Riseborough, 1981), is most likely to have greatest influence in shaping school culture, or subcultures. An analysis of h/her style of leadership is, therefore, *critical to any micro political study of a school, while issues of*

leadership succession, gender, career and the management of change provide useful contexts for an analysis of relations between teachers and the Principal.

While this case study interrogates the different elements of organisational culture, which I identified in the literature, it puts micropolitical relations at the heart of school culture and emphasises the personal and interpretative perspective. It will focus on the strategies used by individuals and groups towards each other, and in relations with the Principal and management, as each seeks to exercise power within the situational and change processes.

Change

Change is a multifaceted and complex phenomenon. Bennett et al. (1992), Calderhead (1988b), Eraut (1994), Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) and Rudduck (1988) have linked teacher development to the ability to change, whether in curriculum innovation, new management or collaborative structures. They see change as possible only within the context and structure of the institution, its values, its culture and personnel. Change has also been analysed from a socio historical and biographical perspective as part of the normal life cycle of the teacher. Change is internalised as the teacher moves through different phases of a career, learning by trial and error, accumulating 'practical knowledge' (Elbaz, 1983) and experiencing 'critical incidents' or 'phases' (Measor, 1985). These are:

interactive or crucial episodes in which new lines of individual and collective activity are forged-----and new aspects of self brought into being.

(Becker, 1966 p. xiv)

Measor identifies three types of 'critical incident'. The personal, such as family and domestic commitments, often puts extra demands on teachers and forces their careers in a different direction. The extrinsic is produced by historical, societal, educational or institutional events, where change forces actions and decisions on teachers. The intrinsic is a part of the normal *progression of career and can include critical phases such as a first year of teaching, career moves or promotion, ageing and retirement*. These 'incidents', which often interrelate, crystallise the individual's thinking or plan of action. They give individuals insight into and an interpretation of the past events, which become the criteria for present perspectives.

Delamont (1983), Hargreaves (1980), Hargreaves (1991), Riseborough (1985) and Sikes (1992) have linked willingness and ability to change to ideological orientation and age, especially with regard to older teachers, who experience low morale and reduced commitment. Ball (1981), Burgess (1983), Paechter (1993b), Paechter and Head (1996b), Sparkes (1987) and Truman (1990) interpret change as a political process involving sometimes disagreeable compromises affecting teacher status and identity. Goodson (1991b) suggests that change must be examined in its historical context, which reflects patterns of power and conflict. Ball (1987) also sees leadership succession, curriculum innovation and career advancement as central to the study of change.

I investigate change in St. Colman's in a historical and micropolitical context, by allowing teachers to identify and relate institutional changes, memorable events, crises or developments which impacted most significantly on their careers. I endeavour to contextualise the teachers' present perspectives by allowing them locate and define them within a biographical historical framework of 'social drama', critical incidents and phases. I was

also influenced by Burgess's (1983) use of Turner's (1957) 'social drama' to analyse teacher interpretations of dramatic events which cause a 'breach' in social relations, leading to a 'crisis', where the cleavage within social relationships widens. These researchers show how 'redressive mechanisms' are used at a formal and informal level to limit the spread of the crises, which culminate in 're-integration', or in 'legitimation' of schism between the parties.

Career

Career is a term used by sociologists to describe one's occupation, how one progresses within it, or how it is perceived or experienced by the individual. The structural and objective perspective advanced by Lyons (1981) interprets career in a macro context, with the emphasis on career maps and progression, where teachers make career choices or are victims of the system. Interactionists see career as subjective and shaped by biography, a variety of social situations and experience, rather than being a linear process. Huberman (1989) and Sikes (1985) look at career as a life cycle that has between five and eight phases, each phase representing an evaluation and sometimes a redefinition of the teacher's orientation to h/her work and career. They use concepts of socialisation, identity, ageing, status, professionalism and change as useful analytical approaches in investigating careers. The use of these concepts is also appropriate in this study.

Socialisation

There are different interpretations of socialisation in the literature, but the importance of biography in establishing the circumstances of entry in to teaching and the adoption of existing roles and perspectives, is acknowledged. Britzman (1992), Connolly and Clandinin (1988), Knowles (1992),

Middleton (1992), Raymond et al. (1992), Siskin (1994), Sugrue (1996) and Woods (1983) suggest that beliefs, values and attitudes on education, pupils, teaching and subject may begin in childhood and be carried through teacher education into the teacher's own career. Teachers can act as inspirational role models or negative identifiers in influencing subsequent choice of subject specialisation and vision of appropriate pedagogy (Briscoe, 1996; Cole, 1985; Knowles, 1992). These early experiences act as life long references for teacher identity, and while career experiences in a school or classroom can challenge, confirm or even invalidate these ingrained dispositions, they remain a significant backdrop to the teacher's professional decision making (Raymond et al., 1992).

Socialisation is viewed by Becher (1989), and Sikes et al. (1985) as a gendered process. Skelton and Hanson (1989) and Thomas (1990) claim that initial teacher education colleges reinforce gendered attitudes. Riddell (1992) suggests that new teachers are likely to reproduce gender divisions. Even if the student teacher's belief system is challenged, there is considerable evidence that college experiences do little in the long term, to alter existing views (Mardle and Walker, 1980; Zeichner et al., 1987). Socialisation also takes place in the early years of teaching, or in a new school within the staffroom reference groups, subject cultures or departments (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Sikes et al., 1985).

Identity , status and professionalism.

Goodson (1992b), Goodson and Ball (1985), Nias (1989) and Sikes et al., (1985) claim that studying the teaching career provides a framework for investigating personal and professional identity. Ball (1972) suggests that teachers can have multiple identities that are substantive or situated. Situated identity is a process and product of cultures. It varies in different groups and

situations such as the staffroom or classroom or subject department. It can grow, retreat or be redefined, depending on the circumstances of a career (Hargreaves, 1980; Nias, 1985; Riseborough, 1981; Sikes et al., 1985). Ball (1985) and Riseborough (1981) document how school reorganisation led to spoiled identities, as older teachers experienced status demotion and relegation to less prestigious roles. This gives rise to the notion of a teacher's identity in crisis or under threat. This pattern towards spoiled identities is also noted by Maclure (1993), who claims that, increasingly, teachers no longer identify with the role or image of the teacher, and teaching is no longer seen as a full time and life long career.

Substantive identity has a deeper, more enduring ideological dimension than situated identity. It reveals the inner self and is linked to past experiences within school and outside of school contexts. Maclure (1993) rejects Ball's (1972) concept, preferring to focus on how identity is

claimed, talked about and otherwise used by teachers for particular discursive purposes. (p. 313)

This view represents teachers as continually discovering and forging their identities, so by allowing teachers retrace their own careers, the factors that contribute to their shifting identities emerge.

Bernstein (1975), Datnow (1998), Elbaz (1983), Lacey (1977) and Siskin (1994) see identity as more related to subjects and their subcultures. Because departmentalisation differentiates knowledge by subjects, teachers are seen as subject specialists. Goodson and Mangan (1995), and Sikes et al. (1985), in their examination of differences between subject teachers, show that these differences relate to their view of the subject, and how they teach it. Ball (1983), Ball and Lacey (1980) and Stodolsky

(1988) document how competing traditions developed in English and History. These subjects promoted distinctive identities and internalised sub-cultures, whose membership required loyalty to *the aims and principles of the subject's tradition*.

The teacher's sense of self is also determined by the prestige, respect and social ranking afforded h/her by others. This is defined as occupational status. Historically, teaching offered upward social mobility (Lortie, 1975), with adequate income, job security and community respect. Cole (1985) and Webb (1985) relate inadequate professional qualifications, poor career prospects, increasing state intervention and declining public confidence in education to negative identity and status. Helsby (1996) has related rising status in the nineteen nineties to ongoing professional learning and increased teacher confidence in the National Curriculum.

Status is a concept closely linked to 'professionalism' and interrelated concepts of 'professionalisation' and 'proletarianisation'. Helsby and Mac Culloch (1996) point to the distinctions drawn between 'professionalism' and 'professionalization'. 'Professionalism' is a term used in a school context, which relates to teachers' rights to determine their own tasks in the classroom:

how they develop, negotiate, use and control their own knowledge.

(Helsby and Mac Culloch, 1996. p.56).

Hargreaves (1984a), Little (1990) and Rosenholz (1989) maintain that teachers have little scientific or theoretical certainty to their work. Helsby (1995, 1996) argues that teachers more readily identify with this form of practical professionalism, which incorporates the notion of 'practical knowledge' (Connolly and Clandinin, 1988; Elbaz, 1983), while the idea of teaching as a

craft, which emphasises experience over theory, is gaining currency (Brown and McIntyre, 1993; Tom, 1984).

Professionalisation can signify the struggle by teachers to acquire the status and position of other professions in regard to pay and conditions. On the other hand, Governments may understand it as enhanced teacher commitment and expertise, involving ongoing professional development. Lortie (1975) used a model of classical professionalisation which emphasised a shared technical culture, service ethic, collegial control and a code of practice. Hoyle and John (1995) also stress criteria such as autonomy, knowledge base, qualifications, accountability and *responsibility as constituting a profession*. These characteristics of professionalisation are applied in Law and Medicine, and Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) claim they are increasingly used by governments to evaluate or control teachers. Lawn and Ozga (1988) maintain that these measures, which involve the development of skillful and 'reflective practice' (Schon, 1983), the widening of teachers' knowledge base, accepting accountability and responsibility, are part of a process involving deskilling or reskilling, giving rise to '*proletarianisation*' (Ozga, 1988) and the '*intensification*' of teachers' work (Apple, 1986).

Ball (1987) links proletarianisation to an ideology of management which attempts to introduce into schools:

the use of structures, types of relationships and processes of organisation from the factory. The managerial Head is chief executive of the school, normally surrounded and supported by a senior management team (variously composed of Deputy Heads and senior teachers). (p.96)

Teachers, he claims, are becoming drawn into systems of administrative rationality, which exclude them from decision making. A rational model of management as seen by the OFSTED and Audit Commission report, recommends a management plan for each school (Levacic, 1995). However, Ball and Bowe (1992) and Ozga and Lawn (1988) demonstrate teachers' capacity to resist tightening managerial control and direction, by interpreting and implementing directives within their own work context. It can be argued, therefore, that managerialism promotes a culture of individualism, and has implications for teachers' own perception of professionalism and relationship to their work. Hargreaves (1994) and Nias et al. (1989) see the development of professional collaborative communities, which lay the foundation for 'reflective practice' (Schon, 1983), as a progressive alternative to traditional forms of professionalism. However, Lawn (1990) fears that such an emphasis could reduce teaching to the practice of technical skills, leading to further proletarianisation of teachers' work.

This investigation focuses primarily on the subjective dimension of career and professionalism, which looks at what it means to be a teacher. It locates the subjective careers of History teachers within a life cycle framework, and it explores how biographies and workplace experiences shape their identities.

Craft Knowledge.

The notion of teaching as a craft originates with the work of Lortie (1975). He believed teaching resembled a craft, in that craft is work that improves only through time and experience. The concept of a 'craft' has been developed by Brown and McIntyre (1993), Cooper and McIntyre (1996), McNamara and Desforges (1978) and Tom (1984) who argue that the craft of teaching is personalised, but has features, gained through experience and reflection, which are common to all teachers.

The notion of subject expertise is researched by Ball and Lacey (1980), Bennett and Carne (1992), Elbaz (1983), Mc.Namara (1990), Schon (1983), Shulman (1986) and Stodolsky (1988), who explore the cognitive, social and epistemological aspects of subject knowledge. Schon (1983) identified professional knowledge as knowledge in action, and good teaching as 'reflective practice'. However, he largely ignored the importance of multiple contexts in teacher thinking and decisions. Elbaz (1983) uses the paradigm of "personal practical knowledge", where pedagogy is shaped by the social context, experience and educational theories. The importance of environmental features such as classrooms, or time of year, is described by Leinhardt (1988) as 'situated knowledge'.

Ernest (1989), while acknowledging that these paradigms are well grounded, argues that they overlook ideology. He presents a model of teachers' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes in Mathematics, while John (1991) has also adopted a similar model for History, which he describes as 'the professional craft knowledge of the History teacher'.

His model is a synthesis of the frameworks outlined and includes teachers' knowledge and philosophy of History, their contextual knowledge of the school, its staff and pupils, their views on education and its relevance to the classroom, their views on the History curriculum and its assessment. This knowledge is underpinned by a set of values, beliefs and attitudes, which shape the choice of particular teaching methods and approaches in the classroom.

This case study is influenced by John's (1991) paradigm, but locates the teacher's craft knowledge within a biographical framework which explores how the History teacher's

socialisation, subject subculture and department context influence his/her perspectives on History, the curriculum and pedagogy.

Conclusion

The concepts I have outlined above are set within a theoretical framework of symbolic interactionism, where the perspectives of teachers are portrayed as longitudinal, multiple, evolving, subjective and micropolitical. In drawing on these concepts, symbolic interactionists use a variety of research methodologies and theoretical analyses, which allow both the researcher and teachers engage in a collaborative and interpretive analysis of the teachers' working context and their life histories (Goodson, 1992a/b). In the next chapter, I examine the ethnographic techniques used in conducting this investigation, where data was collected at different levels, so that a rich contextual analysis could be constructed.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology

Introduction

It is important to establish the links between the questions posed in this study, the theoretical framework in which they are located and the method of investigation I use. The questions posed concern the contexts that give rise to teachers' perspectives. Symbolic interactionists have argued for a variety of ethnographic techniques to study social situations and uncover the complexities of teachers' lives and careers. This chapter sets out the rationale behind my research approach, outlines the variety of research techniques used and identifies the problems and limitations of the research tools.

Initial focus of the research.

The original research began with the intention of studying how History teachers viewed and made sense of their world. (Janesick, 1982). My methodological framework at this early stage was driven more by practicalities than any theoretical perspective (Burgess, 1985a). In my pilot work with three History teachers, I used open ended, semi structured interviews that allowed them relate their early childhood experiences, their first connections with History at home, community, school and college, their experience of teaching History and their relations to the school and wider educational context. The findings suggested that History teachers felt that their perspectives were

not exclusively subject based and that a larger study, locating History teachers in the context of other teachers and the school would be necessary to uncover the influences and experiences that shape their careers.

I considered the option of conducting a large scale quantitative survey supported by qualitative data as Truman (1992) had done on History teachers in Yorkshire. Based on data emerging from initial interviews I piloted a questionnaire in two other schools. However, the problem of accessing teachers, securing the return of questionnaires, combined with the limited data generated, convinced me that such an approach, which didn't allow a personal involvement with my subjects would be inappropriate to a study that endeavoured to portray the subjective reality of teachers' lives (Gitlin et al., 1993). Therefore, plans to do a multi site investigation were abandoned in favour of a small scale qualitative case study within my own workplace, which would also minimise the problems with access and yield richer data on the range of human behaviour (Burgess, 1984a; Delamont, 1984).

Studying teachers' biographies in groups rather than as a collection of individuals, is recommended by Goodson (1991b) because:

the relationship between the individual and wider structures is central. (p.175)

He sees the individual life story, the evolution of a group or a subject discipline, or the relationship between individuals, between groups and how they change over time, as amenable to historical study. History teachers in St. Colman's belonged to three staff social groupings and interacted with other subject teachers in a departmental context, so they could only be studied in the context of their professional and social

relationships. Because the majority of them are long term teachers in the school, a symbiotic relationship exists between their biographies and the school's history. These factors and my gradual discovery of teachers' wider concerns reoriented and transformed my research focus (Ball, 1984a) from a narrow emphasis on History teachers to one that encapsulated the concerns of the whole staff, and developed in a broad conceptual context which included their existing thoughts and actions against the background of past events, experiences and relationships with other subject teachers, departments and other school contexts. Because this study also embraces a micropolitical perspective, I was influenced by Bacharach (1988), who believes that a political analysis, because it concentrates on coalitions as the basis of perspectives, must make groups the primary focus of any investigation of an organisation.

I allowed the data to shape the scope and direction of the research, which was subjected to developing interpretations as my understanding and reading of the theoretical literature widened. Teacher thinking is so multi-dimensional and contextual that ongoing data collection was required not just for clarification and further elucidation, but to allow categories and theories evolve from the data in a form of progressive focusing (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). This approach enabled me to redefine and reformulate the research questions as I probed deeper the teacher's meaning and experience (Hitchcock et al., 1989).

As the theoretical framework developed, then a stronger relationship evolved between the methodology I used and the type of data I collected (Ball, 1993; Burgess, 1985a; Maguire, 1993). By the completion of the pilot research, influenced by the techniques of Beynon (1985), Elbaz (1990), Goodson (1988a),

Measor (1985) and Woods (1984b), I had developed a life history, biographical approach as a theoretical framework for conducting interviews. Goodson (1977/1991b/1992a) argues that the life history method gives access to the patterns, processes and legacies of the past which shape and enlighten present reality, and without this historical perspective qualitative research is incomplete. This method, Elbaz claims, gives voice to the teacher, by allowing her to tell her own story of conflict, anger, stress and fulfilment, which can change according to the context in which she experienced it. Woods (1984b) argued that his research on the teacher reveals career as a deeply human process, which could only be appreciated from a whole life perspective. He claims the life history method provides an opportunity of exploring the relationship between school cultures, the wider social historical background and the individual life interpretations and actions within that context. This could also expose tensions between the formal situations as determined by external factors and the individual's personal view and experience of the situation (Dollard, 1949).

Methodology of the case study.

The idea of single case studies was developed by Ball (1981), Burgess (1983), Hargreaves (1967), Lacey (1970) and Woods (1979). Simons (1996) who conducted case study research over 20 years, argues that

by focusing in depth and from a holistic perspective,
a case study can generate both unique and universal
understandings. (p.225)

In contrast to other forms of inquiry, Simon suggests its strength is that it

celebrates the particular and the unique and frequently yields outcomes that are inconclusive.

(p.227)

Bacharach (1988) also recognises the value of the case study in allowing the exploration of how

political processes unfold over time in a specific setting.

(p.286)

Burgess (1985a) believes that small scale intensive studies conducted by teachers using an ethnographic approach is a most appropriate way to make explicit the views of teachers in their cultural and historical setting. Ball (1987), Hargreaves (1988), Nias (1993) and Nixon (1981) recognized the strengths of ethnographic research in that it enabled them to develop a multi dimensional picture of school situations and convey feeling and perspectives. Another advantage of this method is that data is used to generate theory and develop interconnections between various themes, which adds to the validity of the interpretations (Ball, 1987;Nias,1993).

Ethnography suited the research I wanted to do in that it allowed me to conduct a case study in my own school, where, through interview and observation of teachers in the staffroom, their 'private selves' could come to the fore (Ball,1993; Woods,1979) in a natural setting, which is characteristic of ethnography (Burgess, 1985b). My work is influenced by symbolic interactionists whose research tradition is located in a variety of educational settings, focusing on teachers and pupils, and where the definition of the situation and the perspectives of the participants are centre stage (Atkinson et al., 1993; Ball, 1993). Ball (1987) believes this method is particularly suitable for investigating micropolitical behaviour in the workplace, which is the predominant focus of my own research. Ethnography also

requires involvement, in that fieldwork relies on the engagement of the self, and establishing a rapport with the respondents (Ball, 1993).

Ball (1981) and Burgess (1985b) see the relationship between the researcher and the informants as essential characteristics of ethnography. They believe this engagement enables the researcher analyse the data in the context of the social relationship with the respondents and the method of data collection.

Hammersley (1984a) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) claim the main limitation of ethnography is subjectivity, which they believe can only be addressed by reflexivity and a constant awareness and review of the impact of the researcher on the participants. Eisner (1993) believes the solution lies in a balance between subjectivity and objectivity, while Phillips (1993) supports the '*critical tradition*' where research is open to

scrutiny, to vigorous examination, to challenge.

(p.66).

Because I was part of the social system I was describing, I had to analyse my own motives and reactions and objectify my involvement by striving for a reflexive distance. I was also mindful of Maguire's (1993) research experience, leading her to claim that :

The researcher will have interests, concerns and perspectives which will have precipitated the enquiry in the first place.

(p.226)

Hammersley (1984a) and Lacey (1993) also acknowledge the importance of disclosing one's own biography, theoretical orientations and motivations in order to give internal validity to

the research process. Like Ball (1991), Fuller (1984) and Hammersley (1984a), the orientation of my study is linked to my training in the related disciplines of history, politics and sociology and reflect my professional biography and personal interests. My socialisation into St. Colman's in the early seventies brought a rapid absorption with school issues, and my marriage to the Deputy Head in 1975 heightened this involvement. I shared this interest with close colleagues as we experienced many changes over 25 years. We now form the nucleus of the *Oldies* group, and because many of them are History teachers they are central to this investigation. Being 'activists' (Balldridge, 1971) led us into conflict situations and into the development of shared meanings. Group consensus, however, should not be equated with objectivity (Phillips, 1993). If presented in isolation, such consensus would distort the reality of wider issues and the truth behind particular behaviour and situations. The findings would also lack a contextual background and could not be generalised to other situations. Ball (1987) and Woods (1979) point to this problem of immersion and macro blindness. It was, therefore, imperative to open up this group consensus to scrutiny and challenge by including as many groups as possible.

Because I share Ball's belief that schools are micropolitical arenas with competing interests and ideologies, I recognised that any attempt to reflect issues of power and conflict would be problematic. Lacey (1993) recommends a variety and intersection of views that captures the dynamics of the context under investigation. The existence of clearly identifiable stable social groupings within St. Colman's made this possible, and including at least two teachers from each group went some way to ensuring objectivity and preventing my own position from obscuring or distorting the meanings behind the actions of the participants.

The flexibility of method inherent in the qualitative approach (Burgess, 1985a; Walford, 1991) suited my work situation and provided the variety of research techniques essential for analysing social situations. I used interviews, discussions, *participant and non participant* observation, school documents, personal recall and respondent validation to triangulate the data and strengthen validity. Prain (1997) points to the problems in textualising oneself in research. I believe that, having spent 25 years in St. Colman's and experiencing considerable educational reform and institutional change, I, as an "insider", have a contribution to make through anecdotal evidence, biographical detail and analysis. This personal testimony is supported by evidence from other participants and should further validate, rather than weaken, other data.

Ethical considerations

Measor and Sikes (1992) stress the importance of research agreements, yet Bell (1993, 2nd edn.) alerts us to the problems of *giving written guarantees in advance of the research, that are difficult to meet later*. I informed the Board of Management and the Principal that I wanted to do research in collaboration with teachers, that might involve classroom observation. Apart from initial approval, no queries followed; therefore, I felt free to pursue the research in whatever direction it led. While many teachers were aware of my earlier classroom research, I nevertheless mooted my new research plans cautiously at first, disclosing my intentions initially to department colleagues and establishing their willingness to participate. Considerable discussion took place with them so that they had a broad outline of the nature of my study. I answered queries about how I would conduct the research, about the role and conduct of interviews, observation and feedback. During the pilot stages I shared with them my uncertainty about the focus of the research and

informed them of progress and my need to explore other issues in depth. This was a basis for developing my own confidence and skill in investigation, and I learned as Ball (1993) suggests, that

ethnographic field work relies primarily on the engagement of the self, and that engagement can only be learned enactively.

(p.33)

It also created an atmosphere of goodwill and trust which encouraged other teachers to participate. However, while several History teachers agreed initially to classroom observation, it became clear as this approached that most had professional and personal difficulties about allowing me into classrooms. Classroom observation of History teachers was therefore confined to two teachers who agreed to participate.

Observation of groupings also began at this early stage. Ball and Burgess in their investigations of Comprehensive Schools made excellent use of key informants (Ball1984a; Burgess, 1985c). I built up a rapport with a number of informants who provided useful insights into the social groupings and stories behind the stories. However, I was mindful of Ball's (1993) caution that while

key informants offer a perspective, it is not the only perspective---it embodies its own distortions and partiality.

(p.40)

Hammersley (1984a) endorses a sampling design that is

intentional, systematic and theoretically guided.

(p.53)

Once I moved beyond History teachers, the criterion I applied in the selection of research participants was that each group and a comprehensive range of subject teachers of different ages and gender would be represented. Apart from the seven History teachers, out of the other thirteen who participated, English, Geography, Business studies, European languages, Mathematics, Irish, Religion, Technology and Science were represented (See appendix: 1). Sometimes I met staff members informally in the workroom and got talking about my work and invited them to participate. Subsequently, I realised that the preponderance of English and Business Studies teachers among the participants reflects my own early socialisation and current subject involvement. This adds weight to Siskin's (1994) claim that subject affiliation gives rise to subconscious but tribal boundaries that are only identifiable on careful examination.

Teachers sought assurances that their comments would be confidential in so far as pseudonyms would be used, and they would have access to the findings. Burgess (1984a) raises these issues of research ethics, where findings that might advance a research career could be subject to reinterpretation in a way that *is damaging for practising teachers*.

Burgess (1985) and Finch (1985) point to the need for trust in the researcher's integrity, otherwise the research will be of limited value if those researched feel betrayed. Measor and Sikes (1992) specify respect for persons, self determination and confidentiality as fundamental to the research process. There is a need to safeguard these principles and the use of pseudonyms disguises the identity of the participants from outsiders; nevertheless, participants whose biographies and group affiliation have been outlined in the report, are readily identifiable to other teachers in St. Colman's.

Halstead (1998), Maguire (1993) and Paechter (1998) have reported how the interview process became confessional and therapeutic for the participants. As my research progressed, I also found colleagues seeing me as a sounding board for their complaints against management, giving me snippets of gossip, and filling me in on staffroom relationships both within groups and between groups. They confided that, when initial reservations about the purposes and processes of the research were overcome, they enjoyed the process because it created opportunities to reflect on their career and on issues that they had not considered before. They also wanted to know what I was finding out. There were occasions when I had to distance myself from certain situations and discussions, when the confidentiality and objectivity of my work might be jeopardized (Maguire, 1993).

After the initial interviews many teachers became quite enthusiastic about the process, and hoped their views would be included in the final report. Therefore, I made sure that every teacher who gave tape recorded interviews forms part of the live data that appears in the findings. However, for legal as well as *ethical considerations, some data is excluded from the findings* without altering the substance of the story. I constantly reminded my participants that I wanted to document their subjective perspectives, because I was conscious that teachers might tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. My relationship with teachers over years enabled me to judge whether a view expressed was genuine or contrived.

The issue of interviewing the Principal also posed dilemmas. Ball's (1987) and Burgess's (1983) research did analyse the Headteacher's definition of school along side teachers' definitions. Although I believe this adds to the validity of their findings, I was mindful of Nias's (1993) concerns about

interviewing Heads without teachers' prior knowledge. I had responded to ongoing teacher queries about this with assurances that the Principal would not be directly engaged in the research as I wanted to be a voice for them rather than management. Although excluding a management perspective poses greater challenges to objectivity, the conclusions reached in the findings acknowledge the constraints and difficulties faced by school managers in adapting and responding to the political and social environment in which they operate.

Conduct of the research.

Ball (1993) maintains:

It is the requirement for methodological rigour that every ethnography be accompanied by a *research biography*,---which, by drawing on field notes and reflections, recounts the processes, problems, choices, and errors which describe the field work upon which the substantive account is based. (p.46)

While I used a range of research techniques, I believe that interviews enabled me to tell a great deal about my participants in a way not facilitated by other methods. Initial interviews focused mainly on life history and relationships within the school to create a career map for each teacher (Sikes et al., 1985). Subsequent interviews probed in greater depth issues of identity, status and professionalism, social drama within the context of the school's history under different Principals, teachers' relationships with colleagues, with the current Principal and with Boards of Management (Johnson, 1988). These themes generate the main findings, and the particular strategies I used to investigate these issues will be examined in the relevant

chapters. However, it is important to outline the overall approach I adopted throughout the data collection stages.

Only one teacher, Genevieve, was unwilling to participate in the research process. While she understood she was central to one of the 'social dramas' punctuating the school's history, after considerable reflection, she felt that it was inappropriate for her to comment on the events, but accepted colleagues' entitlement to their perspectives on it. Four other participants were unwilling to be tape recorded, and while brief notes were written during some of these interviews, I found it interrupted the natural flow of conversation and did not yield natural data. Subsequent interviews were purely conversational and I relied on fieldnotes written soon afterwards. I conducted $\frac{3}{4}$ recorded interviews with most teachers, each lasting approximately an hour and a half. While teachers were nervous initially, this disappeared in subsequent interviews. There were occasions, even after data collection had concluded, when teachers' enthusiasm prompted them to enquire about follow up interviews to explore their changing perceptions on school situations. I found, as Huberman (1993) discovered, that interviews gave teachers an opportunity to reflect on their careers in a way not done before. Therefore, it was a positive and beneficial experience.

Discussion prior to interview built confidence and facilitated spontaneity and stimulated teachers' own thought processes. I used *natural situations like free classes, queuing at the tea maker, or the photocopier*, to chat with many other teachers and gain insights into their personal as well as professional biographies. This also informed my research approach and the type of data I pursued. A semi-structured interviewing technique guided the conversation, yet it gave flexibility to both participant and researcher in the interview. Stenhouse (1984) writes of the need for a relaxed interviewing style that is respectful and

flattering to the interviewee. I attempted to give the interviewee a sense of control by using the symbolic gesture of encouraging him/her to sit behind my office desk, or we sat together if s/he preferred. I deliberately avoided using research based language because I felt that technical jargon would undermine the collegial relationship we built up. Interview transcriptions were offered to teachers for comment or amendment, although few requested these as the research progressed.

The timing and location of interviews were important. I avoided interviews at busy times and had to reschedule interviews to suit teachers' domestic commitments. Some teachers preferred interviews to take place in school, but others visited my home, preferring a social rather than a formal setting. These interviews were fewer but longer and yielded richer and more continuous data. Interviews were, at times, emotionally challenging as we recalled 'critical incidents' that had caused conflict, division and pain among the staff. Interviews also caused me to reflect on my own involvement in these events and to re-examine my motivations and ideological concerns at the time. My greatest reservations were in regard to the *Lower Corner*, a group of teachers with whom I had professional differences in the past, yet I believed they were central to my work. Over time, I developed a good social relationship with a Technology teacher through our shared interest in politics and postgraduate studies. I was then able to moot my own research and get his co-operation. I spent longer periods in the staffroom and the research developed interactively (Ball, 1993), in that I cultivated new relationships in conjunction with the research. This was valuable in getting younger and new teachers involved. With all teachers, I practised a measure of self disclosure (Measor and Sikes, 1992), in that we swapped opinions and experiences. While I confined this to professional matters, several teachers

did advert to private matters and the impact of family problems on their career.

However, the interview process was not without problems. These first surfaced with Lisa and Jack, two History teachers. While I readily complied with Jack's reluctance to have his interviews tape recorded, I found that he was at best a reluctant participant. He had difficulty answering any questions touching on management issues and felt the research might be judgmental about his professionalism and pedagogy. After two short interviews he cited his busy schedule for discontinuing the process. He did complete a questionnaire and engaged in brief conversations, more to confirm *factual detail* than offer opinions. Lisa, his wife, participated enthusiastically but showed similar reticence in revealing her innermost thoughts on school management. Blase (1989) points to the difficulty of collecting data on school micropolitics. While I deliberately left management issues to the last stage when trust was well established, I found questions on these issues produced the longest pauses for a number of teachers as they sought reassurances on confidentiality or gave a considered response.

The context of interviews was significant. Most data on management issues was gathered during a year when the school experienced several crises, involving violent attacks by students on each other, one attack on a teacher, many incidents of verbal abuse and sexual harassment of teachers, attacks on school property, declining enrolment and pupil attendance. Therefore, teachers wanted to discuss these issues and they emerged in most interviews as a backdrop in shaping perspectives on the current Principal and Board of Management. It suited the grounded theory approach I wanted to use because it allowed teachers identify what was important to them, whereas

a predetermined theoretical framework would make teachers perceive the investigation as selective.

Difficulties also arose when interviewing teachers about their craft knowledge. I found, as Cooper and McIntyre (1996) did, that teachers are not reflective about their practice and do not articulate the full extent of their knowledge. This inability of teachers to articulate their knowledge has also been reported by Anning (1988), Elbaz (1983) and Schon (1983). I found that without classroom observation it was difficult to focus on specific aspects of teachers' actions or provide appropriate prompts to help their recall. While I adopted Cooper and McIntyre's (1996) method of emphasising the positive aspects of teaching while repeatedly probing teachers' actions, their own descriptions were general rather than expansive. Getting teachers to elaborate through illustration was time consuming and intrusive. The use of a brief questionnaire (Appendix: 2) completed before interviews yielded some factual information and formed the basis for opening up discussion. I found female teachers more reflective in describing and evaluating their own pedagogy than male colleagues and more likely to keep records in preparation for the interview. For the two teachers who cooperated in classroom observation, timetabling constraints made immediate follow on interviews impossible. Even when I recalled aspects of their own teaching they had difficulty recalling their intentions behind their actions in the classroom.

Other forms of data collection.

While most of my research was aimed at eliciting opinions, a teacher's actions are also testimony to the substantial self. I observed teachers' movements in the staffroom, noting new group formations or re-alignments. I noted attendance and contributions of teachers at union, staff and Board of Management report meetings. I recorded the location and

number of speakers and their contributions. I retained copies of the agenda and wrote up brief analyses later. I didn't inform colleagues of this because I believed it would interfere with the spontaneity of meetings. My role initially was as non participant observer, but once I established the pattern of relations, I became a *participant observer*, yet was careful not to influence the direction of events. I stayed in the staffroom for lunch, free classes and breaks, kept a diary on the content of teachers' talk among the *Oldies* and *Middle Group* and wrote up detailed field notes later. I had access to Union correspondence, memorandums issued to teachers and Deputy Principals, Board of Management reports and school documents, all of which helped triangulate the data. I noted any unsolicited comments made to me by parents and attended the A.G.M. of the Parents' council.

Presentation of the findings.

Once I had developed categories and themes from the initial round of interviews I had a broad view of how the data would be presented. While using staffroom and staff groupings for establishing a context for teachers, I also found that this format was useful in analysing and presenting the data objectively. However, writing up was not without difficulties. A chapter on management was abandoned because it became a selective and subjective treatment that did not fully encapsulate the experiences of all staff. Anchoring teachers' perspectives within the culture and ideology of staff groupings did maintain their subjective and shared interpretations that this study endeavours to portray (Clandinin, 1986), and for me it created the necessary distance from the analysis that objectivity requires.

Limitations of the research .

A weakness cited for the case study is a problem of generalizability. Walker (1993) states:

The case study worker may produce a study which is internally consistent and acceptable to all those involved, but which in fact relates only marginally to the 'truth'.
(p.173)

It could be argued that the twenty teachers who participated in this study do not constitute a statistically typical sample from each staff group and, therefore, the findings are weak on external validity. However, I found a correlation and consistency between the data from the teachers in each group, which strengthens the claims to a group perspective. The inclusion of all groups in the staffroom accompanied by thick description should give the conclusions 'fittingness' and applicability (Schofield, 1993) to other similar contexts. As Simon (1996) suggests, this case study documents the unique context of St. Colman's; however, much in the findings can be located in the research literature, and from talking to many teachers in other schools there is anecdotal evidence to support the claims and perceptions as articulated by teachers in this study.

This research, while it investigates the context of teaching, does not address the whole picture. Ball (1987) and Datnow (1998), see a risk in micropolitical analysis of downplaying the role of structural features, and, through a form of macro blindness, dwelling on the trivial and subjective interpretations that ignore the external constraints faced by management. I accept there is a need to explore further the external factors that shape the actions of the school's Board of Management and the Principal. The research does not look at pupil learning from their

perspective, nor make links between pupil achievement and teacher effectiveness. Nevertheless, I subscribe to Ball's claim that much in an institution can be understood within the internal dynamics of the institution rather than from externally determined factors.

I also started this research with my own biography and experiences that shaped my own perspectives on the school context. I was encouraged by Schofield's (1993) view that this assumption is at the heart of the qualitative approach and what gives the work validity is that other researchers would reach broadly similar conclusions. The benefits and insights I had, had to be considered against the natural bias I might exercise when gathering and analysing the data. The absence of intergroup conflict during the period of the research gave me wide access to staff that enabled the study to be as inclusive as possible. I did not want my research findings to revive old divisions, therefore, respondent validation was limited to giving some teachers sections of the work rather than a complete draft. I found that teachers' responses to the findings by and large confirmed their initial attitudes.

Another weakness that can be cited is that this study started as an investigation on History teachers and, therefore, their perspectives shaped the overall direction of the investigation. This is true in so far as that I collected more extensive data on them. However, subsequent to the initial round of exploratory interviews, I gathered data from other teachers simultaneously with History teachers. I was then able to address concerns pertinent to all. However, the data on other teachers' biography, identity and craft knowledge was generated by more focused interviews and designed to elicit points of contrast rather than stand as an investigation in its own right.

Not all staff form part of the history or 'social dramas' that shape the school's present context, so, for younger staff, school crises had a different significance. Their concept of critical incident was student focused, and they identified student suicide and other tragedies experienced within a school context as events that affected them personally as well as in their role and ideology as professionals.

Overview

Between pilot research and the main study, the collection of data was spread over two school years. Transcribing the tapes was the most painstaking part of this process. While initial transcripts were carefully presented in response to possible requests, I found as the number of interviews increased, that transcriptions were hand written to save time. Each round of interviews was followed by coding and analysis, written up and redrafted as new data became available. By the end of the process I was swamped with data and had to make editing choices on what was most relevant and what data would be used to support arguments and interpretations. I tried to make the selection fair and representative of all groups and individual teachers; however, History teachers feature prominently throughout and become the primary focus of the analysis on the teacher biography, subject and department affiliation. All participants in the research are, however, part of the contextual fabric of the school and they are introduced in the next chapter, which describes the school organisation and investigates the social networks in which teachers are located.

Chapter Three

The School as an Organisation.

Introduction.

This chapter introduces the formal organisation of St. Colman's by outlining the physical, historical, management, curriculum and pupil contexts which influence teachers' work. Symbolic interactionists portray schools as complex, uncertain environments in the way in which the interconnections between the formal and informal structures affect opportunities for interaction, the forging of identities and the existence of sub cultures. Acker (1999), Ball (1987), Burgess (1983), Little (1990), Nias et al. (1989) and Woods (1984a) have focused on staffrooms to examine the social networks of the school. This chapter also moves to the staffroom which, as both a formal and informal location for social and professional interaction of teachers, is the nerve centre of the school. The chapter explores the micropolitical and professional relationships of teachers within and between group subcultures, and provides an introductory context, in which the perspectives of teachers, especially History teachers are anchored. It is, therefore, an essential starting point in presenting this case study.

Data for this chapter was gathered through interview, discussion, respondent validation, participant and non participant observation, access to school and union documents. I allowed the teachers to identify staffroom groups, their own socialisation, the characteristics of their own group and perceptions of other groups. I explored teachers' relationships with the Principal and

the Board of Management, their perspectives on decision making within the school and at Board level.

The school site

St. Colman's¹ is a co-educational Roman Catholic Voluntary Secondary school with 894 pupils and 64 teachers. It serves 14 primary schools within a fourteen mile radius. The school has its origins in the early 1900's, as a fee paying private college. Free education, introduced in 1967, paved the way for a take-over in 1968 by a religious order. They retained full control and ownership of the school, which was now fully funded by the state.

The Trustees set out the school philosophy, part of which states:

achieving the full potential of each student, particularly those disadvantaged or marginalised, a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy.

(Congregation of Sisters of Mercy, Ireland. p.0)

However, a questionnaire conducted by Drumcondra Teachers' Centre in 1997 showed 29 of 52 teacher respondents believed St. Colman's did not have a well defined and widely articulated mission.

The school changed location in 1971, and the student population rose from ninety to one thousand and forty nine in 1992, declining from 1995 onwards. Though it embraced a comprehensive philosophy, it retained a strong sense of tradition

¹ Pseudonyms are used throughout the report for the school and the teachers.

along grammar school lines (Sikes et al., 1985). Building extensions took place in 1982 and 1995. Unlike many American schools designed around rigid department boundaries (Siskin, 1994), St. Colman's architecture is a piecemeal development of classroom and disciplines, such as Science, Technology, Home Economics, History/Geography and Music. The Technology block of six classrooms, located at the remotest end of the campus, facilitates easy access and communication between department members. The Music department occupies a two classroom block close by. The Home Economics block is located in the original school, and, despite pressure of space, was only recently extended.

Ball (1987), Burgess (1983), and Nias et al. (1989) in their analyses of organisation, suggested that architecture promoted sub cultures and effected opportunities for interaction. The teachers I interviewed, expressed dissatisfaction with the school's design because the building is functional and minimalist, without a lobby area that could build a sense of community for pupils and teachers and give expression to the school's traditions and achievements. The absence of photographs or mementoes of past Principals, or staff, is perceived as a public lack of recognition and suggests the school is weak on the myths (Maguire, 1993) essential for continuity and staff identification with the school.

Dreeben (1988) points to the architectural conservatism in education. St. Colman's is a traditional building, incorporating three levels, with a sports and examination centre enclosed by narrow corridors and traditional classrooms. The physical structure and size of the school shapes teachers' attitude to pupils and to non instructional tasks (Burgess, 1983; Rosenholz, 1989). Overcrowded corridors obstruct easy movement, foster

student misbehaviour and are stressful for teachers. This inhibits pupil/teacher interaction and promotes classroom isolation.

Ball (1987), Blase (1988a) and Burgess (1983) describe how the physical structure and school resources are used to exercise patronage. In St. Colman's, classroom allocation is based on seniority. Younger teachers occupy ten prefabricated classrooms, removed from the main site. They await classrooms within the main building. Though unhappy with their working conditions, they want to protect the privacy and solidarity their isolation brings:

I like where I am and I like being way out there. You don't have students up and down corridors looking through the glass doors,----- everyone looks after each other. Out there: if you have a problem kid, I could send them into Maura next door, and she would send them into me.

(Rose-Singles)

However, some teachers perceive that micro-political processes operate in favour of subject areas like Technology:

Equipment and classrooms are not allocated on need, but on favouritism; it depends on who you are. I was near the Wood workroom; the pressure came on from the *Lower Corner* that they wanted the room, and I was asked to move to a prefab; ---I wouldn't move; only when a senior teacher retired, I jumped the queue; not because I asked, but it was a handy way to get me-out.

(Nick-Oldies)

Curriculum

The curriculum consists of a Junior and Senior Cycle. The Junior certificate examination, introduced in 1989, is taken by all students after three years, when they are about fifteen years old. The senior cycle aims to encourage as many pupils as possible to continue in full time education, therefore offers five options. Students can pursue a strictly academic Leaving certificate for two years. A one year Transition Programme, focusing on personal development, introduced in 1995, may be followed *before commencement of the Leaving Cert Programme*. It is interdisciplinary and student centred, where teachers design their own curricula to meet student needs. The Leaving Certificate Applied, introduced in 1996, is aimed at early school leavers and those unsuited to the strictly academic Leaving Certificate. It is also student centred, cross curricular rather than subject based. The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme combines the normal Leaving Certificate with technology and enterprise education. Post leaving certificate courses are designed to act as a bridge between post primary and third level education. The school offers twenty three subjects. Junior pupils take ten subjects, while seniors take seven subjects. The Big Three, Irish, English, Maths are compulsory subjects (Ball,1987;Goodson,1988b) throughout the *pupil's career*, while History and Geography are optional after Junior certificate.

Pupils

The school register in September 1999 shows that the pupil population comprises 530 girls and 380 boys, with a drop out of fourteen students by May 2000. Using a variation of Ball's manual/non manual delineation of social class (Ball, 1984b), by taking farmers as a separate social grouping, school records indicate that approximately 30% of pupils come from middle class, *non manual backgrounds*, 20% *come from farming*, and the remainder are from manual families. The local community has the highest level of social problems, rising rural suicide and non marital birth rate in the country (Guidera, 1998). These social problems are reflected among the pupil population, with incidents of pupil suicide, teenage pregnancies, increasing numbers of children from dysfunctional families and a ten percent average rate of absenteeism. The impact of social class on the progress of pupils' careers, and on teachers' perceptions of pupils in regard to discipline and pupil ability, has been noted by Ball (1984b) and Woods (1983). In St. Colman's, pupils sit an entrance examination which is used to assign students to classes within a banding system (Ball, 1984b). Band 1 classes contain thirty honours level pupils, while Band 2 consist of sixteen to twenty one pupils, who follow courses predominantly at pass level.

Management.

The school is owned by Trustees of the Mercy Sisters, under the patronage of the local Bishop. (Secretariat of Secondary Schools, 1992). It is controlled by a Board of Management, who appoint the Principal and staff. The Board conforms to a market model (Caldwell, 1992), in that it has on site management, financed directly from the government, which also pays teacher salaries. The school operates within a national curriculum and

national testing framework and is a private institution with responsibility for its own budget and staff matters. The role of parents is limited. The practice in Britain of presenting an annual report to parents (Farrell and Law, 1999) does not exist in St Colman's. The Parents' Council is typical of some American and British schools (Iannaccone and Lutz, 1994; Martin and Ranson, 1994), where less than 10 per cent of parents attend the A.G.M. The parent composition of the Board is middle class (Datnow, 1998; Iannaccone and Lutz, 1994), with legal, financial and Church interests representing the Trustees.

In St. Colman's, teachers' conception of management is contextual. In different circumstances, I found that management can mean the Board of Management, the Principal, or a combination of the two. The Board appoints the management structure, made up of two Deputy Principals, 12 Assistant Principals and 20 Special Duties Teachers. Although the structure was upgraded in 1998, with 'suitability' as well as 'seniority' becoming the main criteria for promotion (D.E.S., 1998b), 'seniority' remains as teacher union policy and continues to determine the promotion process. Coolahan (1994) suggests that while this arrangement maintains staff harmony, it does not guarantee an effective middle management structure for schools, which Halstead (1998) claims is crucial in sustaining staff morale.

At the recent annual review meeting of middle management, teachers were reminded by the Principal, that as part of management, their responsibilities should extend beyond their contracted duties. Middle managers do not identify with this construction of their role and do not meet formally as a group to discuss management issues. Five Assistant Principals act as Year Heads, with responsibility for discipline and pastoral care of pupils. The norm of collective responsibility has weakened,

however, since weekly meetings between Year Heads and the Principal and within the senior management team, ceased in 1998, a strategy seen by Ball (1987) as conflict avoidance and a means of stifling opposition. Year Heads have no formal authority beyond their own classrooms (Johnson,1989), but support the management team in maintaining the stability of the organisation:

we do as we are told; as Year Heads we cannot make any decisions on our own.----- Every year our work changes without any consultation.

(Patrick—*Oldies*-Year Head).

The Principal and Deputy Principals are known as the management team, towards whom, teachers use informal first names. This contrasts with their use of a more depersonalised vocabulary of 'they' in describing formal authority as vested in the Principal, the Board and the Trustees (Siskin, 1994). The concept of 'team management' has gained popular usage since the advent of lay Principalship, replacing "the nuns" as a form of communal authority. The school operates as a flat hierarchy, in that only the Principal has formal authority over teachers.

Teachers are ambivalent about the Board of Management. They believe it exercises increasing control over their professional lives, yet is rarely involved in the day-to-day activities of the school. It acts as a constant frame of reference for them, but they are unfamiliar with and distrustful of its role and functions. Insights into their shifting professional and micropolitical perspectives on management can be uncovered by investigation of staffroom social networks.

Teachers and the Staffroom.

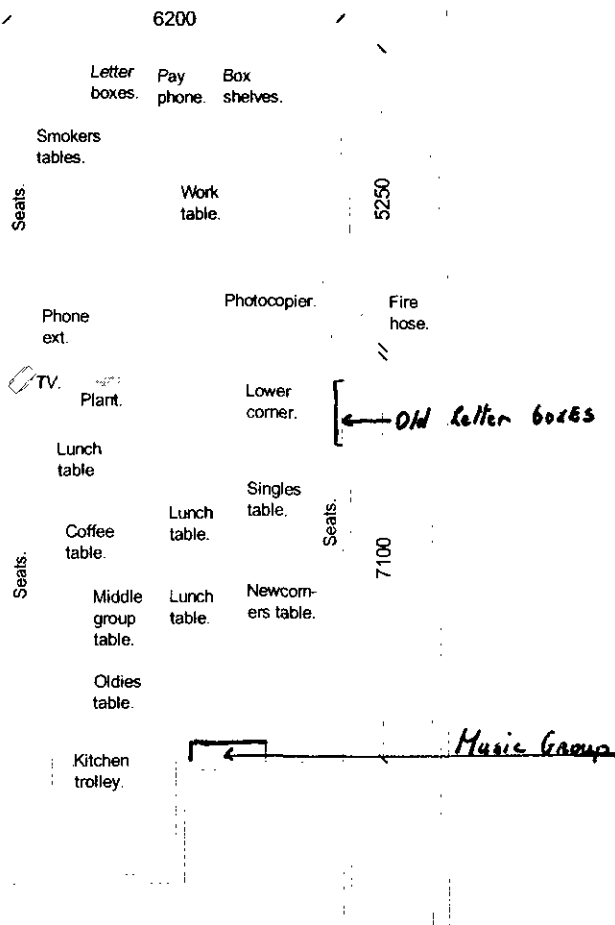
While the social composition of the staff is predominantly middle class in origin, (Drudy and Lynch, 1993) this pattern is changing. Several younger staff are past pupils from lower middle-class and farming backgrounds. Fifty percent of staff live in the local community, the rest choose to live in the anonymity of near- by towns. There is a low staff turnover. A small number of women moved elsewhere with their husbands, yet remained within the teaching profession. Since 1996, nine teachers have taken early retirement due to ill-health, or inability to cope with a changing profession. The abandonment of the classroom is most potent within the religious order. Seven nuns have left in ten years; only one sister remains in school in a pastoral, rather than a teaching role. Casey (1992) in her research on Religious Sisters in America, attributes this trend to their alienation from education systems insensitive to the needs of children. Many teachers in St. Colman's see their departure as 'defection' (Rosenholtz and Mc Aninch, 1987), because, while nuns retain control of schools, they retrain in family counselling and social work, assigning classroom teaching to lay personnel.

Teachers rely on their own social networks, which they cultivate within the staffroom (Woods, 1984a). They gather here before the start of the day, at morning, lunch and afternoon break. During morning and evening break, St Colman's staffroom is noisy and pressurised, with periodic laughter and anecdotal conversation (Hammersley, 1980). Pupils congregate around the doors and teachers balance their time between frequent pupil interruptions, having a snack and animated conversation.

Like the rest of the building, the staffroom's design and furnishing facilitate division. The teachers I interviewed identified seven groups within the staffroom (See figure 3.1.). However, it is important to ensure that staff groups are not reified, and to

recognise that teachers can change from one group or orientation to another. Not all teachers will belong to a group, while some teachers who do, may not share all group values even though they conform to the dominant values of the group (Hargreaves, 1972;Mac an Ghaill,1992).

Figure 3.1



Staff groups in St. Colman's are semi autonomous units, with low permeability, high stability and attachment expressed through their own sense of identity, ownership of space, behaviour and attitudes. Their composition and physical location reflect the formal organisation and patterns of power and influence within the school (Ball, 1987;Burgess, 1983). Their emergence can be located in the opening of the new building in 1982 and the opportunities a larger staff room provided for

segregation according to gender, ideological orientation and socialisation based on age, subject affiliation and shared beginnings. Senior staff, the *Oldies*, laid claim to the upper end of the staffroom, opposite the door. Younger males located at the furthest end, becoming identified as *Lower Corner*, while women, who were originally attached to the *Lower Corner* group, sat along the side of the staffroom and now form part of the *Middle Group*.

The *Oldies*, the group to which I am attached, has eight members: two females, six males. All are part of the management structure as Assistant Principals or Special Duties Teachers. Martin, the Deputy Head, joins this corner on a regular basis. Ranging in age from early forties to mid fifties, they belong to the mature stable body of staff (Rury, 1989), who came to St. Colman's in the 1970's. This group is also bonded by similar professional responsibilities and experiences. Subject loyalties are significant. Most of the group studied History at some stage in University, but Languages, Religion, Business Studies and Art also feature in their degree subjects. Five of the group belong to the History department; four of us are couples, who met and married since joining the staff.

The *Oldies* perceive themselves as committed 'professionals' (Mac an Ghaill, 1992). Unlike Mac an Ghaill's 'professionals', the *Oldies* are union members, but are ambivalent about union effectiveness. They perceive themselves as the '*political wing*' of the staffroom, due to the party political affiliations of four History teachers, union involvement, and their record of 'critical incidents' (Measor, 1985), where they sought to defend and re-legitimise school traditions in the face of the Principal's and colleagues' disapproval (Ball, 1987). They resemble the 'old collectivists' (Mac an Ghaill, 1992) in their sense of 'them' and 'us' in relations with higher management. These attitudes

originate in the history of Catholic schools, where religious orders saw teachers as mere employees whom they accused of complacency, fear of change and lack of commitment (Diggins,1990).

While *Oldies* appear to have institutional power and status, they lack influence with management. Historically, they constituted the 'opposition' (Ball, 1987), engendering a lasting perception of them as a grumbling, destructive clique, who inhibited change and professional growth (Datnow, 1998; Hargreaves, 1994; Mc Laughlin, 1994;Sikes,1984).

I would find some of them really negative; they come in and insist on this and that. Yet these are people who are doing their job exceptionally well. I think they are hard on themselves. It's a feeling they have; they made a huge contribution and are not valued. They have had no say and no responsibility .

(Seamus----*Lower corner.*)

We still have the knockers; they can see no good in anything.

(Overheard comment --*Lower Corner*)

However the *Oldies'* self image was as 'activists' (Baldrige, 1971), who were highly committed and professionally fulfilled, with a vested interest in the school. They lived locally, sent their own children to the school and prioritised academic excellence. This caused a contradiction of loyalty: a commitment to the pupils and respect for the institution, but an ambivalent perspective on the occupants of power and their definition of the school:

They were a bit silly; school was the only thing they had going for them; they went on and on about discipline. I would be cringing about the way they treated students, the way they talked to them and

about them, ---I thought it was awful----- they
were over critical.

(Rose--- *Singles*.)

Differences in age, dress, appearance and ideology are not the basis for social interaction, but there is respect for individual teachers' accumulated experience and access to formal power:

You couldn't ever walk into that group; they still wear suits, but then I got to know them. I wouldn't stay in that corner, but I often go up to them with discipline slips, or to talk about a pupil.

(Rose --*Singles*)

They know more than the rest; if the 'Boss' is absent, someone always knows; now, we wouldn't have a clue.

(Evelyn----*Middle Group*)

Ball (1987) portrays staffroom gossip, humour, self mockery and rumour as powerful political weapons, while Woods (1984a) portrays them as defensive coping strategies. Though middle managers, *Oldies* do not identify with the role of 'officials' (Baldrige, 1971), but engage in ongoing cynicism, humour and analysis of school decisionmaking. Their ideology is embedded in Johnson and Short's (1998) view of school management: '*So goes the principal, so goes the school*', with problems usually attributed to his failure to deal with students and parents (Rosenholz, 1989).

However, career disappointment contributed to a role redefinition for some, producing individualised commitment rather than the preferred communal purpose (Hargreaves, 1982). The origins of these changes lie in the school's transition to a lay Principal in 1993. Ball (1987), Kogan et al. (1984) and Morgan et al. (1983)

point to Head teacher appointments as an exercise in power relations, where the

promotion process appears closed, secretive and biased.

(Ball, 1987, p.172)

Five *Oldies* applied for the position. Sandy was considered the most likely appointee. As a Board member at the time, she recalls her experience:

There was huge secrecy surrounding it. I tried to find out how many people applied. The Chairperson wouldn't tell us; others felt we didn't need to know. The other staff rep. was put on a subcommittee, which was set up to handle it. I objected, but I was overruled. I also asked how many were interviewed. I was told by the Chair: 'I cannot tell you that'.

(Sandy----- *Oldies*)

The appointee was a high profile male executive from the Health Education Service. The appointment gives rise to the *Oldies'* belief that the Board put public relations and managerial interests (Hoyle, 1986; Hughes, 1983) ahead of professional leadership skills which are critical to an effective school (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Ross, 1995). The female applicants who queried the appointment believe that institutional sexism and their ideological orientation worked against them (Ball, 1987; Chadwick, 1989). These issues became the subject of heated union meetings, but to the majority of staff, the appointment was a legitimate decision by the Board:

There was no impropriety; for me it was: the King is dead, long live the King!.

(Justin --Lower Corner.)

A change of Head can create discontinuity, uncertainty and upheaval in the school's culture (Nias et al., 1989). Changing to a lay and male Principal was a difficult transition from the paternalism associated with management by a religious order (Clancy, 1983), and what Shakeshaft (1987) describes as:

the female world of school administration, where women spend more time with people, communicate more and care more about individual differences.

(p.194)

They cared about the individual. It wasn't just seen as managing the whole school. The nuns have much more to give. If you have a family, they have to be your first concern.

(Rose---Singles)

A lay Principal marked a new phase in the *Oldies'* relationship with management, as each sought to establish and redefine the nature and locus of power within the school. *Oldies* perceive the new Principal as both managerial and authoritarian. They believe he set out on his arrival to define more specifically their managerial responsibilities and obligations, while limiting their *discretion and input into decision making*. Ideological debate, which characterised their role in the staffroom and at staff meetings, was perceived as a personalised criticism of the Principal's style and led to frequent personality clashes, which damaged the sense of trust and mutual obligation that had sustained their commitment in earlier years:

I would have noticed a deterioration in the relationship with senior staff, with quite deliberate put downs.

(Justin-Lower Corner)

I think divisions between management and senior staff increased. There was more animosity there, but at staff meetings, of bursting out and giving out; it stopped after a while. They felt they weren't listened to.

(Rose-Singles)

They have become a lot more carefree, their attitude seems to be: let it happen. There is less aggro now; they don't bring up issues.

(Evelyn—Middle Group)

This strategic withdrawal and shifting of ideological orientation (Fullan,1982;Mac an Ghaill,1992) has altered the *Oldies'* sense of identity as culture bearers for the school. Since this research began, their withdrawal has accelerated with early retirements, subtle pressure from management for further retirements and the development of coping strategies (Lacey,1977).

When we were a developing school, everyone was enthusiastic, so concerned about the issues, fighting to get the very best for the students----- I think for years and years we were a very vocal group ---with age we have mellowed, learned how to divert our anger and frustration in other directions, but it doesn't have the same dynamic or vitality it used to.

(Sandy-Oldies)

Compared with the uncertainty among other staff about the role and influence of the Principal vis a vis the Board of Management (Levacic, 1995; Louis, 1990), the *Oldies* have an orthodox view of his position (Kogan et al., 1984). They see the Board as rubber stamping the power vested in the Principal by the Trustees, believing that the Board's priorities are determined by an ideology of management rather than a willingness to empower and provide the necessary material and symbolic support which teachers need (Johnson , 1988).

They are more interested in power and policies. We don't count as long as we don't interfere; it does not support me. We never meet, ---Take Prize giving Day, ----they are never present.

(Patrick-Oldies)

The Board's assessment is: that if the staff got their finger out, then the problems wouldn't arise. There is an unwillingness to face the issues.

(Sandy ---Oldies)

They believe the actions of the Board on early retirements show that staff generally, and older teachers in particular, are undervalued .

We never see Board members at staff retirement functions; there is no public recognition for years of service. Last year we had to remind them that teachers should be treated equally.

(Martin-Deputy Head)

Riseborough (1981) suggests in his research in Phoenix Comprehensive School, how reorganisation bred the emergence of two distinct groups. Those who benefited from change formed cabals, while the losers grouped in cliques. In St. Colman's, the origins and growth of the *Lower* and *Oldies* corners can be linked to the history of change and the subsequent conflict and polarisation (Datnow, 1998 Hargreaves, 1994; McLaughlin, 1994; Riseborough, 1981) They were mutually perceived as 'baddies' (Datnow, 1998), as each challenged the others' definition of school realities.

The *Lower Corner*, an all male cabal of 12 members (Riseborough, 1981), is the most stable and impenetrable. They are perceived as inaccessible, even intimidating, to female staff:

They always sit in a circle and it is almost like breaking a barrier to get into, and they have their backs to the majority of staff at times. Maybe it's symbolic; it's something I'd like to see opened out, to widen the circle.

(Mary---*Smokers Corner*)

It's very intimidating.

(Evelyn--*Middle group*)

We'd never go down on our own; it's not our corner; when they all gather, I feel we'd be taking their space.

(Rose--*Singles*)

The group has six Technology teachers and the remainder teach a variety of practical -oriented subjects: Art, Business and P .E. Two of the group were socialised into teaching among the *Oldies*, but never shared their perspectives on school issues and formed the genesis of the *Lower Corner*. One of these, George, a Languages teacher, is older than his colleagues, whose ages range from mid -twenties to early forties. He is perceived by the *Oldies* and some *Middle Group* teachers as influential in the 'back regions' (Ball, 1987), shaping younger teachers' perspectives in defence of school, as defined by management:

A subtle influence, the creator of a lot of the divisions by his throwaway comments, I have seen him target young female staff as soon as they arrive.

(Sandy-- *Oldies*)

The *Lower Corner* has a high profile within the school, stemming from their positive orientation to the comprehensive philosophy. Their extra curricular activities involve sport and sport related fund-raising, which now form part of their contracted duties and

are pursued within school time. The Technology Teachers, as graduates from the same university, are a tightly knit group who meet regularly on a professional and social basis. Although Technology subjects now attract high achieving pupils, perceptions of its tradition as a low status subject with low status teachers remain (Paechter, 1993b; Paechter and Head, 1996a).

Those in the Practical subjects; it's a nasty thing to say, but they may not actually be that intelligent with academic work.

(Evelyn -*Middle Corner*.)

There are ideological distinctions between them and others in the *Lower Corner*, manifest in dress, attitude to management, career, pupils and curriculum. They have outside work interests related to Technology, and are sometimes employed during school holidays, in school maintenance and renovations. They have a trenchant, but nevertheless, an open relationship with the Principal. However, attempts by the Principal to socialise the Technology teachers into school norms have weakened the harmonious relationship between him and a few of these teachers, leading to withdrawal and the adoption of survival strategies:

We only now meet him as a group, we never go to his office on our own ----- There is a fierce amount of disillusionment, it's got stronger in our corner, people in your corner feel they're getting near the end, and are getting out.

(Seamus - *Lower Corner*)

Difficulties with the Board over disruptive pupils have fractured the relationship further and made them more cognisant of the Board's impact on the daily lives of teachers. Seamus alludes to an incident of physical assault on his colleague, where the Board

decided against the long term suspension of a student, despite a letter from the Union on the gravity of the situation:

I remember statements coming from the students in that class; you would get the wrong impression of the teacher altogether; their angle was taken totally. They (Board) are strongly anti teacher; they have no respect for teachers; there is no face put on the teacher, on the person's life.

(Seamus -former Board member—*Lower Corner*)

Despite Technology teachers' separate identity, their shared interests with the rest of the *Lower Corner* in sport, chit chat, card playing and out of school contact, create a powerful reference group, to which the Technology teachers look for leadership and affirmation in the public validation of their beliefs and actions.

Although the *Lower Corner* has many entrepreneurial characteristics (Mac an Ghaill, 1992), these teachers, as an influential sub-culture, define their own norms in their professional activities, which leads to a questioning of their commitment, to petty jealousies and rivalries:

The lads have a discipline system of their own.

(Rose -*Singles*)

They can do their own thing, play their cards after the bell has gone; we wouldn't get away with it; we would be hauled up to the office.

(Sandy----*Oldies Corner*)

Some are good enough teachers; others couldn't care less.

(Evelyn---*Middle Corner*)

This delineation of them as '*apathetics*' (Ball1987) also arises from their apparent indifference at staff meetings, where banter,

noise, yet infrequent participation is a characteristic associated with them. This is put down to:

laddish behaviour rather than
disrespect for colleagues, or the Principal.

(Justin-Lower Corner)

However, the collective identity and values of the group diminish, when individual group members engage in casual interaction with other colleagues, especially younger females:

During free classes I relate to them individually; the
conversation is light; they can be great crack.

(Rose-Singles)

The *Lower Corner* attach greater importance to the occupant of the Principal's office, rather than the institution, as the 'critical reality definer' of their careers (Riseborough, 1981). Some are perceived as having benefited from an open door policy of management (Mac an Ghaill, 1992), whose sponsorship has facilitated their career advancement into specialist areas like career guidance, computing, and curriculum development.

The *Oldies* and *Lower Corner* have the lowest level of intergroup interaction, although at an individual level their frustration, with what both groups perceive as negative decision making, is forging new relationships. Both have now been overshadowed by the emergence of other groups; a development linked to the recruitment of new staff, the increase in temporary and substitute teachers and the changing pattern of power relations within the school.

Personal friendships can transcend group affiliation and a number of staff straddle groups closest to their own perspective. Social interaction is common between the *Lower*, *Singles* and

Smokers group, while the *Oldies* and the *Middle Group* are more isolated and interdependent. Breda, a History teacher, divides her time between the latter groups. As most *Middle Group* teachers are mothers with young children, they are perceived as family oriented. They possess the stereotypical attributes of female teachers, as conservative in dress and appearance (Weber and Mitchell, 1996), and

stern----distant from learners----- strict adherence to
rules, sticking to ----curriculum content.

(Sugrue, 1996,p.155)

yet, as carers, committed to their own and other children (Ben-Peretz,1996).

The are very concerned---, very good teachers,-----
like my own mother,--- into their families and houses
and homes.

(Seamus --Lower Corner)

They would be more serious, they wouldn't have the
same level of humour ----quite intense, and I would
find at times, sometimes they would need to lighten
up ----they are hard working teachers who would get
frustrated at times.

(Mary-Smokers)

Older female staff see this group as mirroring the social and cultural changes within the staff, in contrast to their own earlier careers, when professionalism was defined in masculine terms and feminine traits were discouraged (Acker, 1980; Kanter, 1977). There is a wider range of subject specialisation, in career guidance, remedial science and languages, in this group, than among the *Oldies*. Like the *Oldies*, they have little involvement with new curricular programmes, or extra curricular activities. Six of this group are middle managers and six have children as pupils in the school. Ideologically, this group could be described as 'centralists'. At a public level they avoid controversy, have a

formal, but professional relationship with the Principal, and focus their concerns on the classroom:

They don't have the cutting edge to pursue issues up front, but they are good at making waves.

(Martin---*Oldies*)

I found that members engage in ongoing negative experience swapping, with discipline as the main talking point (Hammersley, 1984b; Rosenholz, 1989). Lunch time provides an arena for the cross fertilisation of perspectives. Their rhetoric sets the agenda of informal staff room discussion, while the *Oldies* act as a 'utility' reference group (Jackson, 1960) in giving public voice to their frustrations. While collectively they conform to school norms, they are politically attuned to management issues. Their relations with the Board of Management are governed as much by self interests as ideological considerations. As parents, they want greater transparency (Farrell and Law, 1999) from the Board in the conduct of its affairs. Like the *Oldies*, they believe the Board should be supportive of teachers in their search for self-affirmation (Datnow, 1998).

if management don't value you, you don't get the support you need.

(Evelyn-Middle Group)

They now make most contributions at staff meetings. However, the *Oldies* believe that vested interests and self interests determine the *Middle Group's* predominant perspectives. They point to careerism as an example. The promotion of a junior teacher from this Group to the Deputy Headship, in preference to one of the *Oldies*, while popular, caused surprise in that:

it seemed more determined by luck, chance, opportunity and circumstance.

(Ball,1987, p.168)

It is rationalised and understood by staff as a product of micropolitical conflict and ideological divisions within the school. There is also a recognition that the Head as the 'critical reality definer' (Riseborough, 1981) can determine teachers' career prospects and who does not get promoted is as significant as who does (Ball,1987).

I don't think they wanted that Junior member either, but they simply didn't like the Seniors; it goes back to Sr. Alice's time; and they had also gone for the Principalship; there was animosity since then,---- the staff were happy.

(Evelyn-Middle Group)

It was probably politics, They wanted someone with a more gentle nature up there; the seniors are not known for their gentle nature towards students. They're always on top of the students,----- even when she was teaching, she used to dander up the corridors—she had a very relaxed attitude; at the same time she got on with the job; she'd be very gentle, but firm.

(Rose---Singles)

The *Middle Group*, in ascending the physical and managerial hierarchy within the school and developing similar interests and 'professional' characteristics (Mac an Ghaill, 1992), are considered natural successors to the *Oldies*, whose size,

dynamic and significance have diminished with retirement, ageing and role reassessment.

The *Smokers*, the least stable of the sub-units, is located in an adjoining area which incorporates a workroom, photocopying, and mail collection area. It fluctuates in size from nine to fourteen teachers, dependent on the time of year. Young supply teachers, as well as a few from established groups, stop here periodically. A core group of *Smokers*, consisting of five females and two males, have come together through subject and personal friendships:

We were in college together; we have the same subjects; familiarity is important. I went straight to someone I knew; we are of the same age, married and our children are the same age.

(Mary--*Smokers Corner*)

Three teach religion; of these, a married couple, Liza and Jack, also teach History. The dominant perspective here is one of pragmatism and getting on with the job (Woods, 1981).

We're here to do a job; some good things, some bad things come along, but we won't suffer fools gladly.

(Mary—*Smokers*)

The diversity in their composition has affected the nature of group interaction. They seem detached from the serious business of policy and match Datnow's (1998) categorisation of smokers as cynics:

They come and go to us at various times and would stop here, but we just talk about general chit-chat; nothing would be dwelt on ----we know when to step back, lighten the load, make a laugh.

(Mary-*Smokers*)

This group, while maintaining a public facade of detachment, are seen as career minded and 'entrepreneurial' (Mac an Ghail, 1992) in their support of, and involvement in curriculum innovation. The *Smokers* and the *Oldies* have similar subject affiliations in History, Religion, English and Business Studies. They share many ideological interests, but *Smokers* differ from *Oldies* in micropolitical orientation. Lisa and Jack, in their unwillingness to discuss management issues, represent a predominant tactic of 'conflict avoidance ignorance' (Ball, 1987), which sustains their professional commitment and protects them from the trap of 'paradigmatism' (Woods, 1981), which brought the *Oldies* into confrontation with management, and gave them a negative identity within the staffroom:

I would seldom voice criticism in the staff room, I would keep my opinion to myself. I wouldn't feel comfortable, it's not their concern, so we keep the conversation general.

(Liza-*Smokers*)

We would pay great heed to what they (*Oldies*) are saying,- -----we would support things that they felt about policies -but we learnt quickly from watching older teachers who got themselves into such a state, and they carried it with them, you end up zapping your energy--- school is only part of our lives.

(Mary--*Smokers*)

This statement also acknowledges that older teachers, as Sikes et al. (1985) suggest, can be seen as guardians of school traditions and as influencing the perspectives of younger teachers.

Bernstein (1971), Nias (1989) and Nias et al. (1989) found that teacher talk develops a special language and code, which becomes more dense and restricted. Unlike the *Oldies*, who exploit gossip as a strategic weapon, these teachers developed coded terms to protect the privacy of their exchanges:

I am aware that at times people were circling around, wondering if there would be information given by loose talk. We would have been angry about that, because Janet would not even tell us about what had happened at the Board. I would have identified things that someone's said and was over heard. It would have been retold at management level; but we are aware of the source now and we're careful.

(*Mary-Smokers*)

Four members of the *Smokers* have contested Board of Management elections, but, unlike the *Oldies*, who only once succeeded, members of this group have won successive elections. Levacic (1995) and Preece and Golby (1986) claim that teachers generally are apathetic to the election of teacher representatives to Boards of Governance. Elections in St Colman's, by contrast, are characterised by canvassing and tactical manoeuvring by staff groups. Jack was a surprise candidate in the election of 1999. This strategy is seen by the *Oldies* as splitting the vote between the two male candidates and securing the election of his group colleague and the Deputy Principal, two females, whom most teachers believed would add legitimacy and clout to the educationalist perspective on the Board and defend teachers' interests (Huckman, 1994).

The *Smokers'* circumspection protects their interests and also preserves an image of impartiality, which balances the dichotomy of meeting the demands of confidentiality and keeping staff informed about Board decisions (Wragg and Partington, 1989, 2nd edn.). Representatives periodically take the

brunt of teacher frustration with the Board and have devised strategies to thwart persistent requests for information:

'I will have to consult my notes, which I don't have with me'

is an effective mechanism they use to deflect queries on Board decisions.

While many young teachers circulate in the *Smokers* corner, they have their own subcultural identity within the *Singles* group. Exclusively female, this group is the most unstable, with high staff turnover. As in other corners, bonds developed through out-of-school contact, shared social interest, and their experiences as beginning teachers. Without permanent contracts, some are in a vulnerable position and are seen generally by other staff as adopting protective strategies of acquiescence and accommodation to secure their positions (Blase, 1989).

They are afraid they won't be made permanent; they know they could be told to go, with out any regard to what they put into the school.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle group).

Good relationships with pupils, and involvement with new curricular initiatives are priorities, while problems with class management or pedagogy are skirted:

We don't talk that much about pupils, unless there is a difficulty.

(Rose-Singles)

Johnson (1988) and Sykes and Elmore (1989) suggest that many teachers do not want a managerial role, because they see it as a distraction from their real task. Many among the *Singles* do not want any managerial responsibilities involving pupil

discipline, or parent contact, because it risks unpopularity and increased stress levels. A critical examination of school issues is avoided in the belief that the predominant perspectives will prevail:

We don't get hot and bothered about school, like the older staff; we sit back. We can't change things. I can't be bothered. I just want to teach.----- Who wants to get involved and be hated? I don't think I'd take management on; there is enough hassle coming in, and teaching; you want to come home in the evening and forget about it.

(Rose-Singles)

This group never participate at staff meetings and see the Principal's office as more effective in sorting problems than open discussion, which might expose their inexperience, or ideology, leading to assertions of naiveté from colleagues.

There are indications, however, that as this group become more socialised into the organisation, they understand, even if they don't practise, the strategies of their senior colleagues.

The *Singles* group has undergone considerable changes in composition since this research began. Personality clashes have eroded its cohesion, while marriage and family commitments have reduced the social, out-of-school bonds that once existed:

They are good at sussing things out, -----They now talk about their babies, and houses; I get fed up with that; I need something else.

(Rose --Singles)

Some have moved out of the group and have taken up semi-permanent residence in the *Middle Group*. A few now socialise with substitutes and temporaries who make up the *Newcomers*. This group congregates inside the door and find the staffroom ostracising and polarised:

It is very hard to move out of the group.

(Maura -*Newcomers*)

In the absence of any formal support structure for new teachers, they must rely on assistance from subject colleagues. Most confine such requests to a brief induction on course content and resources. They are likely to privatise their problems (Hammersley, 1980), seldom confiding in colleagues. This polarisation seems common to other staffrooms in large schools:

We were assigned a desk and table and we had to sit there; it was worse there than St. Colman's.

(Maura-*Newcomers*)

The staffroom is also polarising for several experienced teachers who remain on the periphery and fail to integrate with any group. Their sense of marginalisation is summed up by John, who has retired:

The staffroom was not supportive; maybe they had their own pressures; nobody would psyche you up, or listen,----- if you're on top, then that's fine. You need to get established, or you wouldn't survive.

Of the seven groups, the *Music Group* of four, is the smallest and meets irregularly. Their physical location in the staffroom, poised between all groups, suggests a position of neutrality: an image they are anxious to convey:

I hope you don't see us as a clique. (Paul)

Paul's relocation from the *Lower Corner* originates in the school's history of 'social drama', but is also subject and interest based. Paul's interest in music forged his relationship with the two Music teachers, one of whom is now his wife, and the other,

Elsa, who like Paul, teaches Irish. Elsa also teaches History. They are deeply involved in the school musical, are 'entrepreneurial' (Mac an Ghaill, 1992) in their professional approach, contribute to staff meetings and support school policies. They have a relaxed social relationship with the management team, but are not perceived as part of an 'inner circle'. Unlike the *Oldies* or the *Lower Corner*, whose loyalties are either to the institution, or the Principal, this group view the Principal as the visible embodiment of the institution, therefore, is owed loyalty and support in promoting his definition of the school. They act as a contrast to the *Oldies*, in seeing school management as a collective responsibility, where problems should not be attributed to the Principal, but to societal values and the constraints faced from the Board of Management (Malen, 1995).

I believe the new wave of troublesome student appeared in the last few years, and somewhere we failed, because he (Principal) put all these structures in place, ----is he being stymied by the Board? I get the impression that he doesn't get their support.

(Paul—*Music Group*)

This group has almost disintegrated since the conclusion of data collection. Paul's wife is on sick leave from work related stress and is considering career alternatives to teaching, while her friend has taken extended maternal leave. Paul and Elsa have relocated to the *Newcomers* corner, but are increasingly absent from the staffroom.

Outside of staff groupings, opportunities do exist for informal interaction. With a mandated timetable of twenty two hours per week, each teacher has on average 9/10 free periods per week. Sixteen to twenty teachers are free at any given time, yet from

ongoing observation, I found that approximately six teachers will be found in the staff room. These classes are used mainly for photocopying or preparation. The majority work in their own rooms and some leave the school premises. Even when one to one discussion occurs on curriculum, co-ordination of content and resources takes precedence over pedagogy. Explanations for this lie in the traditional isolationism and autonomy of Irish teachers and a belief that professionalism demands self reliance (Drudy and Lynch, 1993).

We are very insular; it has been ground into us over the years; we are on our own in our own classrooms,--- as you get older you develop this sense of : I have to work this out on my own. Your own experience has to stand to you; it seems a sign of weakness to go asking someone. I know it's wrong, but we have so little time. It's all taken up discussing what book to put on.

(Paul---Music Group)

Staff meetings.

Staff meetings are formal opportunities for teachers to participate in decisionmaking and develop a shared culture and philosophy. Corcoran (1990) and Kanter (1983) claim that teachers don't want a role in determining budgeting, time tabling; but participation in decisions affecting professional concerns raises job satisfaction. Watkins and Wagner (1987) believe communicating through staff meetings reduces isolation, promotes unity of purpose and direction and helps teachers develop strategies to tackle problems.

Staff meetings in St Colman's are normally held twice a term, with brief information meetings at break times, should the need arise. They focus on discipline and routine administration, but

rarely touch on curriculum, or pedagogy. All teachers I interviewed perceive them as tedious, characterised by rhetoric, indecisiveness, apathy, low participation and occasional bickering:

we search for an elusive consensus, ----We never have conclusions, always indecisiveness.

(Justin-Lower Corner)

They are so short; everything is rushed; just information and handouts. He (Principal) controls the meetings; ten minutes for this, twenty minutes for that.

(Evelyn-Middle Group)

Bredeson (1987), Nias et al. (1989) and Willis (1980) found that formal meetings, generally, are not effective for decisionmaking. At the same time, Nias et al. (1989), Weindling (1992) claim that teachers want clear decisions. In St Colman's, decisions appear more as 'strategic rhetoric' (Sparkes, 1987) by both management and teachers, than rooted in conviction or a singularity of purpose:

If everyone would do the same thing and be totally consistent in it. There are continual announcements: 'no kids on the corridors'; and they're continually out. Someone has to let them out, -----something needs to be done to keep teachers consistent.

(Rose-Singles)

Dunlap and Goldman (1991) and Johnson (1988) suggest that facilitating the expression of staff views promotes involvement and better interpersonal relations between staff and with management. In St. Colman's, the disappearance of ideological

debate between groups on issues concerning school policies, is reflected in better staff interpersonal relations. However, it has weakened teacher involvement in the overall development of the school, and reduced teaching to largely a classroom based activity:

I would say there is more communication now between staff, ----but at staff meetings, where there used to be a level of interest, the dynamic has gone.

(Seamus ---*Lower Corner*)

There was a time when you knew there was bad feeling from one group to another, but now I don't see it---people are not airing their views as often as they would have, keeping more to themselves within their group,----- sometimes you just have to let things go, live and let live and not be bothered—it just seems like you get to your own wee corner and protect it, and that's it.

(Rose--*Singles*)

A lot of the conflict is gone; there is nobody to focus it round now; the majority of people are just worn down by the whole thing. There's a lot of things people will now accept, that they would have had conflict about before. As long as they can have control in their own classrooms and manage there, they are just keeping their head down, they're not getting involved in issues anymore.

(Nick--*Oldies*)

Despite the fragmentation alluded to in these statements, there are 'hot issues' (Ball, 1987) where unity of staff has protected

teachers' vested interests in the face of increasing regulation of their professional activities (see chapter 5).

Summary

Apart from the *Oldies* and those in Technology, Music and Home Economics departments, only small clusters of particular subject teachers can be found in each group. Socialisation into school, age and gender, shared interests and experiences, more than subject, are key factors in forming and sustaining group subcultures. History teachers are located in the *Oldies*, *Smokers* and *Music* groups, which have many similar ideological, but different micropolitical orientations. The next chapter explores how change brought conflict and 'social drama', that contributed to staffroom fragmentation.

Chapter Four

Significant Chapters in Teachers' Lives

Introduction

While the previous chapter explored the composition and characteristics of staffroom social networks, this chapter looks at the history of St Colman's in a period of change, as portrayed through critical incidents and 'social drama'. The key dramas in St. Colman's: the Strike of 1985, the Hank affair 1989 and the Genevieve affair 1990, as they are popularly known among the staff, are now part of the folklore and mythology of the school, surfacing as passing references that arouse both laughter and painful memories. New teachers gradually learn of their significance and how they form a backdrop to teachers' definition of current situations, the nature of staffroom relationships and levels of interaction. History teachers had participated in these events, so they are also important and relevant to their careers and identities.

Nias et al. (1989) write of the power of history. Staff, they suggest

who had been in a school for some time had helped create the existing culture, so they understood the origins of and justification for customary patterns of behaviour. (p.38)

In this study, teachers' perspectives on the management of change provide an informative arena for understanding the origins and development of staffroom subcultures. This history is

set against a background of educational change nationally, which led to new types of school, management structures and new curricular initiatives to meet the diversity of pupil needs (Coolahan, 1981; O' Flaherty, 1992).

When I collected data for this chapter, initially, I asked teachers to record significant changes and crisis periods during their teaching career in St. Colman's. I wanted to investigate how these impacted on their careers, their relationships with colleagues and the school. John, who has since retired, had kept a diary and wrote a lengthy account, detailing different phases in the school's history. Many used a biographical historical framework, listing events in the context of different Principals and the changes they administered. Ball (1987) sees change as an appropriate starting point for the study of micro politics, and the Principal, as the 'critical reality definer' (Riseborough, 1981), as central to any understanding of that process. Ball (1987) applies this concept to three areas of school activity: the interests of teachers, the maintenance of control and conflict over the definition of the school. These issues had surfaced in initial interviews I had conducted. In subsequent interviews, I focused on teachers' experiences under different Principals, while allowing them scope to explore what was of particular importance to them. Conflict and division stood out as significant facets of the management of change. I explored how conflict evolved over thirteen years, how change both fostered and emanated from conflict, and the factors that facilitated conflict resolution.

I relate the school's history as it is pieced together by different teachers, each bringing to it his/her own definition and interpretation of events. In analysing their accounts, I addressed the problem of partial and selective recall (Goodson, 1991c), by triangulating the data from across different staffroom groups.

While memories of precise details have faded, teachers regularly spoke with emotion, as they recalled their involvement in, or perception of the 'drama' as it then unfolded. Their accounts are retrospective; in this respect they differ from Burgess (1983), whose documentation of events in McGregor School was contemporary. Some of the critical incidents I report occurred ten to fifteen years ago, so it is difficult to establish to what extent interpretations are authentic or based on nostalgic hindsight.

Though Burgess (1983) taught at McGregor School during his research, he was not an instigator of events. I, as a member of the *Oldies*, was an active protagonist in the 'social dramas' in St. Colman's. However, by allowing the research participants to tell their own stories, I aim to convey the different definitions of each situation. Where teachers participated in particular conflict situations, I endeavoured to establish if their perspective had shifted. Turner (1971) in his analysis of 'social drama' sees its function as the portrayal of events from different and subjective interpretations, so that the nuances and divergent interests can be exposed. There was convergence among my respondents on their reconstruction of events, but differences in perceptions between the *Oldies* and *Lower Corner* on the origins and effects of conflict. Paul, from the *Music Group*, had a more open perspective than others, who were key actors in the conflict.

Origins of conflict

Teachers appear to have difficulty in adapting to leadership changes, particularly where ideological and the vested interests are present (Ball, 1987). Martin, the most senior of the staff, identified the changeover from his first Principal, Sister Kathleen, to her successor, Sister Alice in 1977, as the most traumatic in his career. Sister Kathleen was perceived as authoritarian with pupils, but an interpersonal leader of staff. She showed concern

for the personal as well as the professional welfare of teachers and made decisions through a consultative process. The staff shared a sense of mission to build and develop the school as a centre of academic excellence. She acted as the senior professional, who respected teachers' discretion and autonomy while practising a form of 'benevolent surveillance' (Ball, 1987) and informal talk (Gronn, 1988).

We were a typically religious run school; she consulted us, but she made the real decisions.-----
She showed great compassion and kindness towards the staff.

(Sandy---*Oldies*)

For the *Oldies*, this period, in the early 1970's, marks the golden age of their careers:

She was a teachers' Principal; she always dealt with the parents first and sorted things out for you.-----
She brought you along with her ideas.

(Patrick--*Oldies*)

At the same time, teachers recalled that in those days teachers would not question a Principal's authority, because schools were in effect private institutions, which were vested by the state and the community with virtual autonomy (O' Flaherty, 1992). Increased state intervention that accompanied free education doubled pupil numbers, and changing pupil needs required organisational and curriculum innovation with a comprehensive, rather than a grammar school philosophy. By the mid-Seventies there was a comparable increase in new staff who questioned their exclusion from the change process:

As time went on she felt that people were not working with her. She began to personalise issues. Once this happens, there is a problem. We didn't always notice her authoritarian traits because it was a time of great development and high motivation, an atmosphere of trying to make something great of this school.

(Sandy -*Oldies*)

Sr Alice, a Home Economics teacher, replaced Sr. Kathleen, who retired early. Her leadership, from 1977 to 1990, exposed the divisions and cultural diversity which even gradual and self styled comprehensivisation can bring to a school (Riseborough, 1981). It also highlights the difficulties misplaced idealism and enthusiasm can generate for a new Head in his/her initiation period (Day and Bakioglu, 1996; Huberman, 1989). Sister Alice is identified by staff as having been an authoritarian Principal. To *Oldies*, she lacked the charisma of her predecessor and led more through domination than persuasion. Rather than bridging the past with her vision of change, she seemed determined to impose her own definition of education, which emphasised a child centred, pastoral environment, that combined extra curricular activities with the academic:

When she came first she rubbished everything we had achieved in the previous ten years. She constantly referred to how things were done in the other (Mercy) school.----- an all girls school ----she thought she could have the same relaxed atmosphere here. She had no idea how to handle boys; everything was too harsh, --to her there were no bad pupils, only bad teachers. ---She wanted to stamp her own mark on the school, ---she never had much time for the old staff who started with Sr

Kathleen.----- We were developing as a school because our results were improving. ----- She put no emphasis on results the first few years.

(Martin-Oldies)

At first, staff meetings under Sr. Alice were seen as information giving sessions. A question could be interpreted as a criticism, and the senior staff, denied a legitimate voice, resorted to the political tactic of 'strategic maintenance' (Ball, 1987) through eulogising the old culture and reflecting with nostalgic affection on the former Principal. The law of 'retrospective preference' (Ball, 1987) gained momentum in the first three months after her arrival, and the Principal, feeling that senior staff were attempting to undermine her position, set out to assert her authority. An unscheduled staff meeting was called, and the staff of twenty four were challenged to set out their reservations about her style of management. Lutz (1988) has described such decisive action as a form of 'witchfinding', where loyalty is invoked as a vehicle for maintaining integration, and detractors are portrayed as dishonest, disloyal and unreliable. Martin and a few staff gave voice to their criticisms; the majority acquiesced by their silence and others rallied in defence of the Principal. The perceived troublemakers were silenced and the power of the Principal remained intact. Being gradually isolated from the emerging and dominant culture, they formed a sub culture of opposition. This marked the first public display of ideological dissent, but conflict remained largely subterranean (Ball, 1987). Paul recollects his impression when he joined the staff in 1979:

When I came on the staff, I soon found there were divisions. I wondered did they stem from something that had happened long before. You hear about them in little snippets of conversation, like, '*do you remember?*' You never know exactly what

happened, but you know that something happened that changed the relationship between the Principal and certain staff members. Every one was very professional, but there was a distance there that was hard to bridge.

Over time, the divisions widened. Sandy explains how Sr. Alice's style of leadership exacerbated these divisions:

She cultivated cliques; certain people seemed to be the Principal's clique. She contributed to the divisions; she listened to a small group, and others were sidelined,-----she felt threatened by successful lay women. She felt more comfortable with the men who didn't raise issues, didn't quarrel about anything; the camaraderie she had with them!

Ball (1981) showed in his study at Beachside, that change is a social, gradualist and negotiated process, and providing it respects differences, established identities and status can survive. Educational changes in Ireland were taking place at the same time as Government spending on education declined (O' Flaherty, 1992). These changes had increased pupil numbers and the 'intensification' of mandatory work (Ozga, 1988), but reorganisation in St. Colman's was implemented without consultation. All staff were timetabled to their maximum of twenty two hours, as opposed to their customary nineteen to twenty hours of class contact. House examinations had to be *corrected and processed in one week instead of three*. The school day changed from eight to nine class periods, and the tradition of having a free period each morning and afternoon disappeared. Class sizes went from twenty four to thirty pupils. New subjects were introduced and time allocated to existing subjects was reduced.

Plans for a major building extension got underway in 1980. Under D. E. S. regulations, the Trustees had to provide 15% of funding. A fund-raising committee of male teachers was established and acquired a high profile within the school and wider community. The management of the building programme also added to Sr Alice's status. Her public identification with Government politicians, in her efforts to maximise and expedite the extension, alienated political activists on the staff who didn't share her party political allegiance. When the Prime Minister, Mr. Charles Haughey, agreed to make an official visit in 1980, tensions were heightened as several *Oldies* talked of strike action to highlight overcrowding and bad working conditions. Although plans for a strike fizzled out, this incident showed how, when national politics are fused with organisational micropolitics, the potential for conflict intensifies and is averted only by the teachers' sense of professionalism (Ball, 1987; Hoyle, 1988).

The opening of the new building in 1982, was hailed by Sr. Alice's supporters as a political and personal triumph. Rather than eliminating old divisions however, the new building became the arena for further discord. The introduction of Technology subjects initiated the final phase in the comprehensivisation of the school. It also brought in more male staff in an increasingly female workplace. Paul sums up the status accorded to Technology teachers:

The practical subjects teachers were like the new kids on the block. Those who came were also into sport; she was very sport oriented. Those who brought glory to the school had too much leeway; she mothered them a bit more than others.

Technology teachers in the *Lower Corner* had access to power and resources and deferred only to the Principal, when the normal channels were through the Deputy Principal. This

fostered a culture of dependency which elevated the status of the Principal, but sidelined the role of the Deputy Principal:

I don't know what her relationship really was with Martin, but we tended to go over the head of Martin; we were encouraged to go over him, if you understand me.

(Seamus-Technology)

Technology teachers see the origins of this patronage as rooted in the increasing rivalry that was developing between Vocational schools, as part of the state education system, and Voluntary Secondary schools (Drudy and Lynch, 1993). They believe Sr. Alice was determined to challenge a neighbouring Vocational school's traditional niche in practical subjects:

There was a whole political background to this; a political rivalry between the V.E.C (Vocational Education Committee-State sector) and the secondary system. We were taking the brunt of that rivalry on the ground.

(Seamus—*Lower Corner*)

These developments also highlighted the tensions between the vocational and academic traditions within St. Colman's. Technology's monopoly of resources ensured that the low status that practical subjects had by tradition (Goodson, 1993, 3rd edn; Paechter, 1993b) didn't arise, while academic subjects experienced status reversal (Ball, 1987), in that ongoing demands for a school library were not met, and teachers had to rely on their own resources.

The *Lower Corner*, because of their involvement in sport, fund-raising and practical subjects, were seen as a powerful coalition and beneficiaries of patronage, because they practised the politics of 'ingratiation' (Blase, 1989), by supporting the Principal in any measure she initiated:

Once we went towards the practical subjects, a lot of those teachers were willing to work around the school, that's when I think favouritism came in. At that stage certain people were more useful, they were valued more. They were willing to break the rules (Union) and back Sr. Alice on most decisions. -
-----It was just self interest; they did favours and got rewarded. They got good rooms; in some subjects you could order what you wanted. For us, there was never any money, there was always a waiting list.

(Nick-Oldies)

There were favourites being promoted. If someone had a good idea, it was taken over and given to them.---- It was a question of people willing to do more work for their own ends, and that suited management.

(Jerry-Oldies)

Commitment to practical subjects however, did not extend to Home Economics. A letter sent by that Department to the Board of Management in 1993, indicates how the pattern of advantage benefited masculine oriented practical subjects:

'At present there are three teachers and approximately 400 students using one kitchen, which was built 25 years ago to accommodate 20 students'.

Goffman (1959) and Ouchi and Wilkens (1988) point to the management of culture, where the Principal can be a symbolic leader who uses language, images and ritual to unite the staff. Sr Alice identified with the *Lower Corner* by sitting in that area at break times and joining with this group at staff functions and social outings:

She was very supportive of staff, staff discos, societies; she was very much one of us. You could say anything to her; she felt at ease in our company, and we felt at ease in her company.

(Seamus-Lower Corner)

Staff meetings and school occasions, like Prize Giving Day, rather than integrating the two traditions, further fragmented the divisions. The explicit celebrations of sporting and extra curricular events, while academic achievement was ignored, convinced teachers of traditional subjects that they were undervalued and second-rate. 'Student of the Year', the most prestigious award on Prize Giving Day, became embedded in micro political machinations. It also brought to the fore the politics of gender. While nominees were selected by pupils, staff elected the final winner. Winners were normally male pupils identified with sporting, rather than academic achievement. Only when this became the focus of a threatened boycott by some female staff, was a new format introduced, allowing a separate award for sports personality and individual awards for boys and girls.

New female staff were socialised by males and masculine values predominated in social and work relations. Married women recall an unsympathetic environment, where attempts were made to deny them full maternity leave, or compassionate leave, to look after sick children or parents. At the same time

special leave was granted to 'loyal male staff' to pursue sporting and personal interests. Baldrige (1971) and Ball (1987) point to the low participation of women in the micro politics of the school. I found that it was married females' experience of male advantage that heightened their awareness of the politics of influence and patronage and initiated their own involvement in both 'resistance' (Willis, 1977) and confrontation.

Ball (1987) and Morgan (1986) show how control over information and communication can systematically influence the definition of organisational situations and create patterns of dependency. The 'opposition' believe they were denied resources and access to communication, which was centralised in the Principal's and Secretary's office. This became a visible symbol of the hierarchy of influence within the school, and had professional implications for teachers' autonomy and capacity to conduct their work:

When I wanted something photocopied in a hurry, I had to leave it, whereas others could walk into the office and photocopy away. I was told that only secretaries could photocopy. It was the same using the phone. They could walk in, take up the phone and ring for anything. Even when I had school business, you had to ask permission to use it, you were made feel you were imposing.

(Nick-Oldies)

They believe they were subjected to greater monitoring than their more loyal colleagues, and their views were misunderstood and distorted (Blase, 1989).

I always felt she was pursuing me, watching what I was doing. She never got off my back; I found that a tremendous pressure.-----What you said was often

misinterpreted by her, never taken at face value, she always felt there was another agenda.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Corner)

Oldies believe their tactics of 'strategic maintenance' ensured that high academic standards were maintained, despite the increased emphasis on practical subjects and the abolition of rigid streaming to meet the needs of the less academic pupils, now attracted to the school. At the same time, Sr Alice's management of formal change had fulfilled a key leadership role which Ball (1987) describes as the task function of initiating and directing:

We had a very high standing in the community and in the county; the person at the head can influence that.

(Seamus-Lower Corner)

You could say, we had a very good school; she was very efficient. -----After about five years, things changed; discipline was tightened up, as she soon found out that parents wanted good results. No matter what else the school provided, in sport or extras, parents will not remember those, if results are bad.

(Martin-Oldies)

I had a troublesome senior class and I had been complaining about them. She went to the trouble of bringing a few of them to the office, lifting their copybooks and checking for homework. Then she brought me into the office and gave me a dressing down. She felt I could be giving more homework and

correcting it.----She was a good disciplinarian, and if you had trouble with kids, she backed you up in front of the student.

(Nick-Oldies)

Weindling (1992) suggests that it takes up to five years for a Principal to affect the ethos of a school. This data also suggests that teaching and learning had re emerged as the central concern of the school and Sr Alice was deemed an effective Principal, who supported her staff as professionals in the classroom, and maintained tight control of discipline, in a way that earned her respect from pupils and parents (Rosenholz, 1989).

At the same time, she did not perform the 'human function' (Ball, 1987) in a way that allowed dissenting voices a legitimate role:

Then she expected loyalty; I wouldn't call it loyalty; she expected you to do as you were told, basically.

(Nick-Oldies)

She would be most supportive,----- if you were a person she thought was always on her side and suddenly you didn't agree with her, that was regarded almost as disloyalty.

(Jerry-Oldies)

The Strike of 1985.

This culture of conformity was severely tested with the Teachers' Strike in 1985. Divisions, normally subterranean, now came to the surface and a 'crisis' ensued. A two day national pay strike took place during the mock Leaving Certificate exams. Sr. Alice proposed that missed exams would take place after school to

compensate for lost time. Several *Lower Corner* teachers publicly endorsed the proposal, which became a decision without further discussion. This action was perceived as agreement by default (Morgan, 1986) by some *Oldies* who requested a Union meeting. As History was one of the exams in question, Nick and this researcher sought union support for our decision not to supervise or assess these exams. Both sides now showed their hand and argued strategically and politically to influence the outcome. It also brought to light the ideological orientation of the *Middle Group* as 'centralists', who, though they wished to avoid controversy, were persuaded more by argument of the issues, than loyalty to the Principal. The majority of union members supported the History teachers and Sr. Alice backed down after a heated staff meeting, where feelings were aired:

People were bashing each other; they allowed control of their feelings to go overboard; it was a case of: who supported the Principal! Joan (Union steward) was shell-shocked.

(Paul—*Music Group*)

The strike was significant in that rather than uniting the staff, it reinforced divisions between the 'opposition' and the 'party of power'. There was now a recognition and legitimation of schism between the parties (Burgess, 1983). It also marked the beginning of a more adversarial style of leadership by the Principal. Issues were now debated openly and democratically, which gives legitimacy to the claim that Heads cannot promote their policies without contest and debate (Ball, 1987; Morgan, 1986). Openness was, however, defined on the Principal's terms, and any attempts to establish transparency on issues of school funding or resources were seen as illegitimate and subversive of the Principal's authority (Ball, 1987). The level of participation at staff meetings remained small, but highly vocal,

as the opposition attempted to constrain the Principal's power. Issues were challenged by *Oldies* and counterchallenged by the *Lower Corner*. *Oldies* feel that the Principal secured majority support for her proposals by cultivating the *Middle Group*, who became involved on the occasion of 'hot issues' (Baldrige, 1971) and could now hold the balance of power:

Sr Alice commanded control over a certain group and she couldn't control others, so it became very divisive. She couldn't control their thoughts, their ideas, their opinions, so she cultivated other groups to back her up.

(Breda-*Oldies*/*Middle Group*)

However, this female group, now more established and secure in their careers, had become less subject to 'unobtrusive power' (Ball, 1987) and more assertive in pursuit of self-interests. Consequently, many of the Principal's plans were blocked or deferred. Proposals to lengthen the school day were defeated, and teachers began to follow Union directives on class size, working to rule, corridor supervision and ensuring that working conditions conformed to Union regulations.

Cyert and March (1963) state:

The 'accidents' of organisational genealogy tend to be perpetuated. (Ball, 1987, p.213)

Ball uses this quote to support his claim that social relations will mirror the political history of an institution and will influence positions adopted in fresh disputes. The decision by the Trustees of St. Colman's to set up a Board of Management in 1989 revived old disputes, which now dominated the agenda of the election. Staff were entitled to elect two members to the Board. The *Oldies* put forward this researcher and a male

colleague. The *Lower* and *Middle Group* had a candidate each. Micro political activity intensified and the election focused on issues of being pro or anti management. The *Oldies* failed to get any member elected. Suspicion has survived among these teachers, that Sr Alice influenced both the choice of candidate and the outcome:

When the Board was first set up, there was an element on the staff that didn't want teacher representatives on it who might challenge it.---- I have a feeling, I'm open to question, that the two elected were given a little nudge and a wink--- they were pressed to go forward. I'm very suspicious, because one of them, she expressed no interest for a long time in anything that would have involved politics or decision making. Somehow this person ends up interested.

(Breda -- *Oldies/Middle Group*)

The elections to the Board of Management legitimised the belief among the *Oldies* that they were deliberately marginalised from positions of influence and that younger staff who showed unquestioning loyalty to Sr. Alice, had undue status and access to power. Normal staff relations were fractured as 'those out of office' (Ball, 1987) gave public voice to their criticism:

The savagery that was taking place between teachers was threatening to affect the efficiency of the staff and some halt had to be put to it. I knew from my own experience, that some staff were unsympathetic, could ignore you, and make light of your problems. Some were nasty on a personal basis, some of the younger members felt they had a right to lord it over the school. They were more in

with the 'in crowd' and others were past it and inferior. ----- If you weren't with the in set, they did not want you, and some females were worse than the men.

(John-Retired.)

This statement encapsulates what many staff saw as a climate of rancorous division that had enveloped the staffroom, and fits readily into what Burgess (1983) describes as a phase of mounting crisis, which can only be limited by redressive action by those in positions of leadership. Sr. Alice set out to defuse the crisis through two days of in-service education which subsequently became known as the 'Hank affair'. To what extent the 'Hank affair' was fortuitous or planned, is unknown and can only be guessed at by my respondents. However, there is a belief among the *Oldies* that while Sr. Alice wanted reintegration of staff, it was to be on her terms, in a way that would bring the 'opposition' (Ball, 1987) to heel and boost her image:

She wanted to create a feeling of comradeship among the staff, that some of them were very anti her, and just awkward, and maybe Hank could point this out to us and we could learn a lesson.

(Nick—*Oldies*)

She felt it would enhance her position, it would be a day of adulation.

(Sandy-*Oldies*)

The 'Hank Affair' 1989

Events were organised for Friday evening and all day Saturday, as attendance at out of school functions was expected as a demonstration of commitment (Blase, 1989). The absence of

Nick and Jerry, two History teachers, on Saturday, though viewed with disapproval by Sr. Alice, reflects their unwillingness to subordinate their interests to those of the Principal:

It was Cup Final Day. Since I was a teenager, I never missed it. There was no way I was going to miss a tradition of years---Sr. Alice was extremely annoyed and said it, not directly, but to somebody else.

(Nick-*Oldies*)

Hank and Jill met the staff for what teachers believed would be a series of talks similar to previous annual staff in-service days. However, the format was different from staff expectations. As group leaders, Hank and Jill invited staff to join them in whichever group each teacher preferred. Acting as initiators and facilitators, they created an atmosphere of involvement and openness, which enabled teachers over two days to give voice to their feelings. Hank's group, predominately male, was dominated by *Oldies* and *Lower Corner* teachers, while other teachers along with Sr. Alice had a less contentious session with Jill. The *Oldies* described the micro political processes of back stabbing, character assassination, scheming and exclusion they felt subjected to. The *Lower Corner* questioned the *Oldies'* commitment and attitude to Sr. Alice. Females in both gatherings spoke of a masculine dominated school, where they were subjected to subtle sexual harassment and gender joking by insensitive males (Cunnison, 1989; Datnow, 1998).

Paul reflects on the emotional impact it had:

Gestalt psychology; ---this exposure thing was big then. I know it is an unpopular comment to make among some staff, but I quite enjoyed this idea of conflict management. ----A lot of staff were not

prepared for the emotion, tears and the pent up feelings that came out. It was the ultimate risk situation. Hank didn't realise himself that he was in such an explosive situation.

Staff had to challenge their previous attitudes and actions and confront those who had caused them hurt. Following the 'Hank affair', many staff did recognise that school was not the same reality for all teachers (Ribbons et al., 1988) and that accommodation could be reached if colleagues could accept and respect their ideological differences:

The only thing I remember about the day was that staff should respect each other.

(Jack-Smokers)

Gray (1988) in his analysis of organisations, suggests there are two ways to manage conflict: to face up to difficulties and resolve them or reach accommodation.

Paul assesses the impact of Hank on himself and others on the staff:

I firmly believe that some people in our group resolved to reconcile the two factions. The differences are still there, closer friendships were not established, but people realised they had hurt others. There is no doubt that the two groups faced each other and saw things in a different light; they could still have rows, but accept the other's philosophy. Before Hank came, I saw you (this researcher) as a highly result oriented control freak. From then on, I could see your emphasis on professionalism. I even began to confront my perception of your corner; I questioned everything

about St. Colman's. I began to sit down and talk to people. And I made a decision that time, never to sit in one particular place in the staffroom, but to talk to different people.

For some males, it sensitised them to the hurt experienced by female colleagues from gender joking and incidents of sexual harassment:

I didn't know how awful it was for some members of staff to come down our end to collect their mail, that they felt intimidated. I was annoyed that I was associated with that. I was upset. I didn't know that by joining a group, it would end up in that state.

(Seamus-Lower Corner)

The Hank affair continues to generate mixed feelings among the staff. Some see it as a legitimization of schism (Burgess, 1983) between teachers:

----it opened up the divisions that were really there, it didn't heal anything, it just let us see the hatred ---the very bad staff relations that existed.

(Breda--Oldies/Middle Group)

The defence mechanisms were still in place. -----
After Hank the tables were rearranged; two days later, they were done away with.

(John-retired)

Other *Oldies* see it as a 'critical incident' (Measor, 1985) that enabled staff to confront the discord in staff relationships, and as a catalyst which gave teachers a sense of empowerment (Dunlap and Goldman, 1991; Johnson, 1988), that had

implications for Sr. Alice's style of leadership and her future as Principal:

It was the most liberating day I ever experienced; it got rid of fear.

(Sandy-Oldies)

A lot of things came to light that day, -----it was clear that loyalty to the school and loyalty to her were not the same thing. Those who criticised her the most could never be faulted on their commitment. Some of her closest buddies weren't too pushed about the classroom; any day she was out they would swing the lead. ----- they played up to her and she gave them whatever perks were going. Younger staff thought the older ones were cranks who kept the pot stirred, now they could see they had genuine grievances.

(Martin-Oldies)

It gave an awful shock to the Principal; she was very disappointed in what people said. ---It awakened in them, that you can come out and say what you want; to this day they are not afraid to say things openly.

(Nick-Oldies)

Another crisis eight months later shows that reintegration had not occurred (Burgess, 1983). This crisis directly challenged Sr. Alice's ability to frame the social realities in which teachers operated, and became an issue of confidence in her leadership.

The 'Genevieve Affair' 1990.

This affair originated within the Mercy Order and was to convulse the staff for several months. Sr. Genevieve, a Career Guidance and Geography teacher, informed the convent she was leaving the Order, taking effect immediately.

Traditionally, when nuns left the religious order they relinquished all rights to their former employment. Sr. Genevieve created a precedent by asserting her intention and her right to remain on the staff. The Board of Management held an emergency meeting, giving her three months' dismissal notice. At a Union meeting a message was conveyed from Sr. Alice that Sr. Genevieve had been given a job elsewhere, and no formal strategy for action was adopted. The veracity of Sr. Alice's assurances to the staff was subsequently contested by Sr. Genevieve and she sought backing from colleagues to reverse the Board's decision. While some *Oldies* saw Sr. Alice's intervention as an opportunity to challenge her 'influence' (Hoyle, 1988), others wanted to express solidarity with a colleague. Nick explains his proactive role:

some people felt she was being treated very badly; a Board meeting had been held, ---our staff representatives should be representing people like Genevieve ---at that time they did not represent her properly. I was not even friendly with Genevieve --but I felt she was being victimised, so I felt, being a trade unionist, surely that's what trade unions are about! That's how I got involved; myself and another teacher, Genevieve's friend, were discussing it and came up with the idea of a petition. I felt the representatives may have given the Board the wrong

impression of feelings on the staff, so a petition would show that a majority supported her.

Once the petition got underway the 'mobilisation of bias' (Ball, 1987) that had characterised the dominant value system of the school, was initiated. The staff were expected to make a choice between misplaced loyalty to a colleague and Sr. Alice's rights and integrity as Principal:

A lot of resistance came from staff who said it was none of our business and withdraw it. Sister Alice sent another person to say she was absolutely livid about us interfering in personal business of the Sisters of Mercy.---- She even said there was no way Genevieve could stay on in school: it would be herself or Genevieve. While there was no direct opposition from Sr. Alice, others came up on the quiet to me and said the nuns had looked after her; 'they've given her a job in Dublin but she wouldn't take it'.

(Nick-Oldies)

Many teachers who signed the petition understood the dilemma facing Sr. Alice and the religious order's sense of scandal in a rural community; nevertheless, they felt compelled to put principle before Church sensitivities.

Three female staff and eleven male staff refused to sign the petition. Their reasons ranged from their insecurity as new teachers, deference to Sr. Alice and the Church, to suspicions of Sr. Genevieve's motives:

It would be disloyal, it would be anti establishment and anti the school. To me it was very much the Trustees' business and we were not part of that.

Genevieve was a woman I didn't know at all; she used you (Staff) as a forum to get out. When she stated she was leaving, she got much of the sympathy thing. But to be up front, even the dogs in the street knew exactly where she stood.

(Seamus-Lower Corner)

Canvassing support for the petition brought conflict to a potentially threatening level, as teachers sought legal advice on the implication of their actions, while others felt intimidated or threatened with legal action for spreading false rumours about Genevieve's plans:

I wouldn't sign. I was given an awful hard time. Other staff would have been pressurised, but would not have been isolated the way I was.

(Seamus-Lower Corner)

Staff believe the petition, together with the prospect of legal proceedings for wrongful dismissal, influenced the Trustees and the Board of Management to renew Genevieve's contract as a permanent teacher. Perspectives on this affair have, however, remained unchanged. Two of my respondents who refused to sign the petition, feel that Genevieve's marriage a year later vindicated their belief that information pertinent to her case was concealed.

Sr. Alice's resignation at the end of the school year 1990 was not unexpected. While the majority of staff relate this decision to her perceived loss of face on the Genevieve affair, the *Lower Corner* feel her resignation was for personal, rather than professional reasons.

The leadership succession was smooth and uncontroversial. Sr Mary, a Science teacher, was a popular staff member but a reluctant Principal. Although teachers recall her as being too soft with pupils, she was admired as an excellent interpersonal Head, who worked to integrate the staff through a culture of inclusivity, a good working relationship with teachers and avoidance of patronage or identification with particular groups. She introduced a consultative form of management that facilitated weekly meetings with middle management, while staff meetings were chaired by volunteers among the staff. In this sense, the *Oldies* were reintegrated into an active role in maintaining the stability of the school and contributing to school policy. Hot issues remained as part of the ideological debate among the staff, but the ongoing conflict between staff and the social dramas that had characterised Sr. Alice's principalship diminished. When Sr Mary left St Colman's three years later, abandoning teaching and later the religious life, her departure, according to staff, marked the end of an era.

Summary

This chapter has documented the history of St. Colman's through the subjective interpretations by teachers of the change process as the school experienced a series of 'social dramas' and critical incidents that polarised the staff around the Principal as the definer of teachers' realities. The next chapter explores these realities further, by examining the context of professionalism and how it impacts on teachers' perspectives.

Chapter Five

Professionalism

Introduction

While the previous chapter explored the interrelationship between teachers' careers and St. Colman's from a historical and micropolitical perspective, this chapter examines aspects of professionalism which teachers believe define their professional identities and status within the work place and in the wider community.

-----teacher professionalism is what teachers and others experience it as being, not what policy makers and others assert it should become. The experience of professionalism and of its denial are to be found by studying the everyday work of teaching.

(Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, pp.22/23.)

Using this experiential framework and Helsby's 1995/96 theory of 'grounded professionalism', I asked teachers to give me their definition of a profession and of professionalism. These were terms several teachers had used frequently in the course of earlier interviews, and have common usage in Teacher Union Journals and in the staffroom. As teachers were given an outline of the interview theme in advance, they had an opportunity to reflect on their own definition of the terms.

Professions and professionalisation.

I found that most of my respondents do not view professionalism as conforming to a particular model. However, they identified many characteristics identified in the literature, which they could relate to teaching as well as to a general context. Younger teachers were less likely to use the term 'profession' in describing their work, yet at the same time they had an image of what it is to be a professional, based on their own experience as pupils and now as practising teachers:

I never regarded teaching as a profession. Even when I was a student in school, I didn't realise that teaching was a profession; to me it was 'anyone can do that job'. I saw doctors as a profession. ----When I came to St. Colman's I saw the suits and ties and the order. It wasn't like that at my school.

(Rose- --Singles)

I've never thought much about it before; I'm not sure about being a professional, but I'm qualified to do a job and should do it as best I can.

(Maura- Newcomers)

Other teachers I interviewed felt that the term 'profession' was now readily applied to all jobs which required training in skills, competence and commitment.

I think a profession is the job you have trained for; you have acquired a certain amount of set skills, like a plumber, a doctor, a dentist, a teacher. I don't see teaching as being any greater or less than other professions.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Group)

You are qualified to do a job in a professional way;
it's more than a job; I have to think about it, and
spend time over and above.

(Liza-Smokers)

The contrasting views of younger and more experienced teachers show that professionalism is a social construction based on teacher socialisation and experiences within the school.

In response to my question on teachers' status, there was agreement that teaching had declining status in comparison to thirty years ago. There were contradictions between how teachers believed they were perceived at a national, local and individual level. Older teachers saw teaching decades ago as a vocation which had close connection to the Church, invoking the notion of service to pupils, parents and community. As part of a Church controlled system providing a private education for the middle classes, teachers were insulated from public scrutiny or appraisal and, like their religious superiors, were accorded reverence and esteem in the community (Coolahan, 1984).

We were always known as the 'Masters'; I only get
that rarely nowadays.

(Martin-Oldies)

These teachers frequently pointed to their own decline in social status compared to other professions, such as doctors and solicitors. Williams (1980) claims that the monetary value the latter put on their services and time, created a social distancing that teachers cannot achieve with their clients. These older teachers felt that the traditional notion of vocationalism, which emphasised unselfish altruism rather than self-interest (O' Suilleabhain, 1969), created social expectations that teachers

should be available for extra-curricular activities and access to parents, in a way not expected from other professionals. They felt, however, that commitment shouldn't be equated with mere service for remuneration, and that teaching differed from other professions in the caring of children:

we see ourselves as givers, as people who are more than just doing a job, being responsible for the nurturing of the child, giving all that we can.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Group)

Free education, introduced in the 1970's, increased the size of the profession, and this development has dissipated teachers' identity as an elite group in the community. As a level of education increases in society, teachers are no longer perceived as intellectually or socially superior to others:

People are no longer in awe or mystified by our profession; they would be more aware of what is going on; parents have become more vocal, more critical, so that the magic surrounding teachers of years ago has gone. That is a pity, because that added a lot to our discipline in the school as well as the classroom.

(Mary ---Smokers)

Teachers also pointed to the 'points' system (Entry qualifications for Irish Universities) as determining the status of the profession. While 540/575 points (six A's) is essential for Medicine, it is possible to do Arts or Science on four hundred points. There is a sharp decline among graduates in applications for the Higher Diploma for Secondary teaching, because teaching no longer enjoys the same status it occupied ten years ago (Flynn, 2000). Primary teaching, however, continues to attract the 'brightest

and the best' (Sugrue, 1996), despite suggestions by (Williams, 1980) that their role 'in loco parentis' gives them a lower social status than secondary or university teachers.

Participants in this study believe that teachers' generally active role in voluntary, community and Church organisations earns teachers respect that compensates for low salaries and lower social status than high earning professions. Society once saw them as having an easy job, with security, a comfortable salary, and long holidays, but increasing social problems and the demands made on teachers to adapt, and facilitate changing pupil needs, has brought greater understanding and sympathy:

In the last few years, people say to me, 'I wouldn't have your job for anything! How do you control young people?'

(Liza-Smokers)

Teachers I interviewed are not overly preoccupied with 'professionalisation'. They are concerned, however, that as an increasingly gendered profession, their declining status will continue and they will fall behind police and nurses, whose benevolent image has invoked public sympathy and increased remuneration. Several teachers pointed to the shortcomings of their union in highlighting pay disparities with other public servants. However, apart from some *Oldies*, most see their union as having a 'defensive' function (Maguire, 1993) and are uninterested in an active participatory role for themselves (Ozga, 1987). They make sporadic but strategic appearances at union meetings when 'hot issues' (Ball, 1987) are on the agenda. *Singles* and *Newcomers* seldom attend, seem uninterested in union affairs and must be persuaded that membership has benefits and relevance to their interests.

Image, conduct and competence.

My respondents identified more readily with the notion of their own professionalism, which they define in terms of image, dress and appearance, professional competence, conduct and commitment. Weber and Mitchell (1996), acknowledging the importance of clothes as part of identity, investigated the images that children and adults have of teachers. They show how stereotypical images of the female teacher as prim, well dressed, with men in suits and ties, prevail. A dress code drawn up by St. Colman's staff in the 1990's outlawed the wearing of jeans and runners, but permitted the wearing of trousers by females. Most teachers believe that a conservative image best promotes professionalism. Younger teachers, while identifying dress as relevant to professionalism, are not attracted to a conventional image of teaching traditional in St. Colman's, and the dress code is increasingly ignored:

I'm very casual myself in my dress----- I think that does damage us.

(Rose -Singles)

Although new teachers are advised of appropriate professional dress, there is a belief that declining standards have eroded the teacher's image as a figure of authority and commitment:

When I came here first, I probably didn't dress as formally as I do now, because I was a lot younger. I have noticed over the years, that if you are going to have a relationship with the class; if you're going to be basically different from them, you must dress formally. Teachers should not be wearing jeans into schools: we are professionals and we should dress as professionals; I don't care what subject you are

teaching. I think for a lot of young teachers coming out now, obviously in their diploma courses, dress is not being emphasised as important.

(Nick-Oldies)

Teachers were conscious that, as professionals, they could be held up as role models or 'super moral agents' (Shipman, 1968, 2nd edn.), leading to expectations of conventionality and conformity. The resonances of the 'Eileen Flynn case' endure. She was dismissed from a convent school in 1982 for living with a separated man and giving birth to his child. She contested her case to the High Court. Counsel for her employers, a religious order, claimed in court:

the office of a teacher is not discharged by attendance during specific times. In any school, the strongest formative influence on the children is the example of teachers.

(Cooney, 1985, p.1)

The Judge ruled against her, citing the decision of the Canadian Supreme Court, which upheld the right of a Catholic School to employ only teachers who subscribe to its Catholic ethos. Despite the restatement of this position by the Courts in 1997 and the legalisation of discrimination on religious grounds in Church run schools, in the Employment Equality Act 1997, teachers feel their private life should not be subject to scrutiny (Mulcahy, 1997).

It could obviously be expected that teachers should be of sound moral character. I think they are entitled to a certain moral code from you as a teacher, but you are entitled to your privacy. I cannot see how it would affect the way that teachers carry out their

professional duties. If one is more contented in themselves and happier -- that maybe helps you professionally.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Group)

For teachers in this study, domestic commitments provide a coping strategy to relieve the stresses of the job and create boundaries between a personal and professional life:

The fact of having three children who have their lives; they make demands on me. I have to be there for them----I cannot take school home---, and it's fine, that's the way I live my life. I close one door and open another.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Group)

Frequent references to the importance of a family and personal life as a coping strategy occurred among all subject teachers I spoke to. There is also a significant decline among males in the time given to extra curricular activities, as their family commitments increase and other personal interests develop. When teachers socialise together there is difficulty in eliminating "school talk" from conversation, which dwells on interpersonal and micropolitical relationships rather than classroom pedagogy. Friendships outside teaching are more common among the *Oldies* (Huberman, 1993), where they endeavour to shake off the teacher image (Maclure, 1993). Several reported that the identities they had cultivated in formal classroom relationships made them seem 'bossy' or detached in social situations, while their body language and gesticulations had betrayed their teacher identity (Walker, 1991; Waller, 1984). Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) claim that balancing life and work, while

complementing classroom interests, is an effective form of professional development and protects against burnout. I found, when talking to History teachers, especially married couples, that because their professional and personal interests were linked and enjoyed in a family context, they spoke about their subject with animation and enthusiasm:

We would take our children (family) to places like the Ulster Folk Park, The Round Tower in Glendalough. I would love to take children (pupils) away, but you can't do that.

(Liza -*Smokers*)

When Nick and I go with the family we always go to the museums and art galleries. --Nick brings the children to all the sites; they love that as well. He is a keen photographer; we take loads of pictures of dolmens, castles.

(Breda-*Oldies/Middle Group*)

My respondents believe that commitment and competence in the classroom are fundamental to any claim to professionalism. A school ethos that emphasises good conduct, school uniform, punctuality and regular attendance, is seen as essential to the exercise of professionalism as well as enhancing teachers' professional image. The *Oldies* and *Middle Group* believe that a formal relationship with pupils, with clear boundaries between the personal and professional, is the most effective in the long term:

Teachers should always maintain a social distance from the pupils; that doesn't mean you can't have a

joke --it is important for pupils to realise that they are not a friend or buddy. It helps to maintain discipline; as a professional you must be in charge ---- troublemakers are in a minority,-- pupils appreciate a class that is well ordered.

(Nick-Oldies).

This view is not shared by *Lower Corner*, *Singles*, or *Newcomers*, who see little connection between pupil culture and teacher professionalism. They are largely indifferent to school uniform and other minor rules which they don't think are essential for effective work in the classroom:

Some people feel very strongly about uniform, but I don't care. I focus on certain things in the classroom, whether I'm getting attention and respect. --- If I have a working environment, I don't notice the uniform.

(Justin-Lower Corner)

Some in these groups do not use 'teacher language' (Measor and Woods, 1984), and permit an 'alternative culture' of social chit chat and humour in the classroom (Goodson, 1991d; Goodson and Walker, 1991b). The *Oldies* and *Middle Group* claim this tendency leads to cultural confusion among pupils, in that behaviour boundaries are not clearly drawn. They point to situations involving physical assault by teacher and pupils on each other. While these incidents evoked sympathy among colleagues, these teachers believe that losing control is more likely in an unstructured environment, where mutual respect breaks down and an emotional rather than a professional relationship develops:

Teachers should avoid all familiarity, or discussing things that happen outside the classroom; keep to

the subject matter, then it is strictly professional. The secret of success is knowing that the teacher and pupil have a very particular type of relationship, not to be confused with the relationship with a friend.

(Breda, *Oldies/Middle Group*)

Nias (1989) explored the idea of feeling like a teacher where the personal and professional identities merged. This meant being yourself in the classroom and being comfortable in the role. She claimed that the need to maintain control and authority, while cultivating a relaxed relationship with pupils, often posed a challenge to the self image, creating an identity of tension and paradox.

Some teachers, during interviews, used the term '*performance*' to describe their lessons, which suggests that they must act out a role. There was also a conflict between what the teacher sees as building a warm relationship with her class and the need to define the limits of control (Nias, 1989).

I see myself as being very strict with children in the classroom, to the point where there is no humour. ---
-- I could be a little bit lighter. I tried this, but it doesn't work for me. I would not take the risk that I might lose control.

(Breda *Oldies/Middle Group*)

Teachers see an authoritarian, yet caring relationship between the Principal and pupils as fundamental to a professional environment. Many are openly critical in the staffroom and in interviews of his casual, conversational approach:

It's embarrassing at times; he's up the corridor there, joking and laughing. Five minutes later when they're

caught in trouble, he roars and shouts and loses his head, and really gets nowhere. -----You have to have a kind of balance---he doesn't know most of the students.

(Nick-Oldies)

Young teachers, although they identify with a more relaxed, non confrontational relationship with pupils, recognise that fraternisation (Woods, 1983) may weaken the Principal's image as an authority figure:

I like the way he can talk to the kids. He chats to them a lot---he's very nice to them, but when they do something wrong and he gives out -it doesn't have the same effect. He may have to reprimand them two or three times. I think it's the same with me: they don't take me seriously the first time, so I have to repeat myself---he is much the same.

(Rose- Singles)

Teachers I interviewed, see professional competence as delivering the curriculum to meet the demand of the state examinations and maximising pupils' performance. Martin sums up what these teachers believe would be the ideal teaching situation:

enacting the curriculum, ---going prepared to the classroom, no time-wasting, putting the curriculum across effectively, giving homework, ---The teacher must be an authority figure with firm classroom control. I couldn't cope with the chaos which I know occurs in some classrooms. To me order and discipline best serves the student.

Such an emphasis on technical competence suggests a degree of restricted professionalism (Hoyle, 1974). However, teachers recognise that the exigencies of the classroom, the economic and social environment in which they work, require a repertoire of skills to meet the diverse and sometimes contradictory demands of parents, pupils and school. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) in developing their concept of post-modern professionalism, argue that teachers must be committed to active caring of the emotional, as well as the cognitive development of pupils. Teachers across different subject areas felt that increasing emphasis on this dimension of teachers' work was impeding, rather than advancing their professionalism:

We have to be at times mother, nurse, psychiatrist, social worker; sometimes you wonder! 'when am I the teacher?'
(Mary—*Smokers*)

We're at the coal face of everything that's happening in society. We have to take on board all the social problems: family breakdown, mental, physical and sexual abuse. We are trying to survive all that. A lot of parents are just passing the buck: they're getting us to do the job they should be doing themselves.

(Seamus—*Lower Corner*)

Hargreaves (1980) and Shulman (1986) argue that pedagogy and subject knowledge give the teacher authority and a claim to professionalism. Sikes (1985) found that, as teachers get older, pedagogy assumes greater importance than subject knowledge, while Skilbeck (1989) claims that a national curriculum gives both requirements greater urgency.

An analysis of the interview data suggests that subject expertise and pedagogy are a taken for granted part of teachers' professionalism, which develops from experience and a learning

approach to their work. University graduates have little confidence in their one year professional training. Equally, they believe that in-service training for teachers is inadequate, sporadic, with insufficient attention paid to institutional constraints on resources and time. The notion of 'extended professionalism' (Hoyle, 1974) is common in Britain (Hargreaves, 1994), and was recommended for Irish teachers in the 1980's by Coolahan (1987) and Fultan (1987) as providing a rationale for and greater control over their professional practices. The Irish Government's Green Paper (D.E.S., 1992) states:

teachers should be facilitated in participating in and benefiting from structured opportunities for in-career training. (p. 165)

However, only preliminary measures have been taken to promote professional development. Most teachers recall the negative experience of in-service education that accompanied the introduction and implementation of the Junior Certificate Programme in 1992. However, recent in-service education for the updating of Leaving Certificate subjects is viewed more positively. Huberman (1993) and Thiesson (1992) found that teachers who invested in classroom based curriculum innovation had higher levels of curriculum satisfaction than those involved in external programmes. Teachers in this study point to the need for time to reflect, and exchange experiences with colleagues, but balk at the notion of classroom collaboration. Professional development courses are poorly attended, if run in out of school time. Martin, the Deputy Head, explains how ongoing professional development can lead to neglect of immediate classroom and pupil concerns in a form of 'distended professionalism' (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996).

Most will only go within school time; there are teachers gone to some course every week. ---That

will increase with more new courses coming in.-----

The Dept. (D.E.S.) doesn't always allow for substitutes. That causes real problems for us, with parents complaining about unsupervised classes. ----

-- After school they're too exhausted to do extra study, especially those with families.

This statement also contains an implicit acknowledgement that domestic commitments inhibit womens' support for innovation (Apple and Jungch, 1992).

While St. Colman's teachers welcomed curriculum reforms under Junior Certificate 1992 and ongoing reforms at Leaving Certificate, they feel it leads to intensification of work (Ozga,1988), leaving no time for talk with colleagues, or relaxation (Hargreaves,1993).

In the old days, every free class, I sat in the corner and read the Irish Times and chatted to colleagues. There is no time now; with the new Leaving Cert. and Post Leaving Cert. placement scheme, I'm totally overloaded.

(Justin -- *Lower Corner*)

Datnow (1998) and Paechter & Head (1996b) found that female teachers were more adaptable than male colleagues to innovation. I found that, though it creates pressure on time and resourcefulness, teachers who are 'entrepreneurial' (Mac an Ghaill, 1992) and become involved in new curricular initiatives, feel stimulated and challenged professionally:

Since I went into the area of Transition and Leaving Cert. Applied, there are a lot more demands. I have a lot of weaker students who depend on me for an awful lot of material.---- Their work involves research,

project work, task work; they wouldn't have the know-how to use a library; they depend on me to set things up for them. I spend my lunch time photocopying material, for there is no other way I am going to get that information. I do not have free classes really ---I have to bring them along with me.--
---- I could walk into an honours English class and I wouldn't have the same pressure; neither would I have the same challenges.

(Mary-Smokers)

Differences exist in commitment to teaching as a profession. Teachers over forty no longer see teaching as an attractive profession, but have few career options. Younger teachers, who chose teaching as a career at a time when jobs were more competitive than now, remain committed to staying in the profession. None would encourage their own family to choose teaching because the learning demands of their career make it too stressful. This negative perception of teaching is gaining currency among teachers and parents throughout Ireland, who prefer their children to go into more highly regarded and paid careers (Flynn, 2000).

I would still enter teaching, but I would be highly reluctant to encourage any of my own children to go into it. I have seen the problems in teaching that take years to overcome. I wouldn't like to see any of my children going through that learning process; managing groups of children takes years; it takes an awful lot out of yourself.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Group)

Nias (1989), in her work on primary school teachers, found that they would change school or reference groups in order to find a

match between their substantive and situational selves. Several teachers in this study expressed a desire to change school, if opportunities arose. Beginning teachers did not see teaching as a life long commitment, and felt that the early forties would be a good time to change career.

There are also contradictions in levels of job satisfaction. There are high levels of satisfaction derived from teaching a subject and working with pupils in a classroom situation, which teachers believe earns them the most status and respect:

One would be results; it's great to see a child achieve to the best of their ability; you can see the enthusiasm in them; it makes it all worthwhile.

(Lisa--*Smokers*)

I think it's more than results; it's their whole attitude to their work; doing it well, maintaining discipline in the room, being serious about the work and helping the children to achieve their best, that gives you status.

(Breda--*Oldies/Middle Group*)

We know we're achieving something. I think we are a very hard working staff. We have our students' needs and interests at heart----- I like my students to do well in exams; that is foremost in my mind.

(Mary-*Smokers*)

At the same time there are high levels of frustration and disillusionment with teaching within a school context, a view articulated most strongly by the *Oldies* and *Lower Corners*:

There is definitely something wrong in St. Colman's. You just have to look at staff absenteeism. I'm not being critical of people at what is going on in their lives, but if you look at the pattern, there is some type of a malaise. If I was in management in an organisation, I would be looking at the problem and asking, 'What is wrong in our institution?'

(Justin - - *Lower Corner*)

High levels of absenteeism are attributed by Kyriacou (1980) to stress induced by poor working conditions, low job satisfaction, poor school ethos, pupil misbehaviour, work overload and an unsatisfactory career structure.

Control, accountability and appraisal

Walsh (1987) in his examination of the development of managerial and employer control, points to the formalisation of employment relations by specifying more closely teachers' conditions of service. Employers, he claims, assert bureaucratic, contractual control and the teacher employer relationship becomes one of exchange rather than of trust.

St. Colman's Board of Management has issued policy documents regulating career breaks, work sharing, maternity leave and D.E.S release for external assessment of students in oral and practical subjects. These arrangements, traditionally negotiated informally with the Principal, are now contracted by the Board through a formal applications procedure. The Board's policy on Departmental 'release' met with resistance. Although the Department of Education provides substitution for released teachers, the Board recommended that each teacher limit external work commitment to one week per year. Though teachers united behind their union and refused to alter existing

practices, the issue is a continuing and building source of tension between staff and management.

Teachers believe that the Board of Management is not acquainted with the reality of school life as experienced on a daily basis. They believe it is unsympathetic to their professional problems and does not support staff development, teaching and learning:

We are being constantly undermined by the Principal and the Board. The Board doesn't understand the problems we are facing here. -----They want the school to run properly, but they don't want to take hard decisions.

(Nick--*Oldies*)

We used to have in-service days when all the staff got together; we never have that now. The Board spends plenty on pupils; we get nothing.

(Evelyn-*Middle Group*)

Board members are more concerned about the physical well-being of the school.

(Seamus --Former Board Member- *Lower Corner.*)

These perspectives are similar to the findings of Deem and Brehony (1994) who maintain that Governors concentrate more on finance, buildings and public relations than on professional concerns.

While there is resistance to increasing control by management in the regulation of working conditions, teachers are unanimous in their support for a centralised, prescribed curriculum, so long as

it allows professional autonomy in 'how to teach', if not 'what to teach'. They remain committed to externally set and assessed state examinations, and endorse their union's opposition to D.E.S. proposals for school based pupil assessment. Because teachers have traditionally relied on externally determined and designed curriculum packages to guide rather than dictate their pedagogy, I found that 'proletarianisation', which Apple (1986) claims is increasingly deskilling teachers, is not an issue in a classroom context. Sparkes (1987) shows how teachers resort to 'proximal justification', making the curriculum more practical and relevant to the individual teacher's self (Olsen, 1980; Wood, 1984c).

-----there would be sections of the course I'd just cut out; you tend to pick and choose. If you have a weak stream you just repeat certain material; you use your skill to gauge the level of work to the class you teach.

(Nick---*Oldies*)

An inactive Inspectorate and informal subject department system also allows my respondents flexibility in the selection and interpretation of the curriculum (Ball and Bowe, 1992) and they do not feel constrained by central control over curriculum or policies (Archbald and Porter, 1994).

These views contrast with those of British teachers, whose confidence and professional autonomy were threatened by the centralisation, prescription and accountability enshrined in the National Curriculum (Cowley, 1995; Helsby, 1996). However, I found there is growing anxiety that the Education Act, 1998 (DES, 1998b), which gives statutory regulation to school planning, evaluation and individual teacher inspection, will lead

to greater state control, bureaucratisation and proletarianisation of teachers' work (Ozga & Lawn, 1988).

Pedagogy was less an explicit concern for my respondents than their ability to handle situations, whether in the classroom, with parents or management. However, teachers are increasingly questioned by parents on the effectiveness of their pedagogy. In these situations many feel isolated and defensive, relying more on colleagues than the Principal or the Board of Management to support or vindicate their professional decisions. Teachers in this study accept accountability (Hoyle and John, 1995), in the context of parent teacher meetings and state examination results. They believe examinations are an independent, equitable measurement of professional competence, but are critical of suggestions in the media for publication of results or for performance related pay.

Under the recommendations of the Joint Managerial Board of Catholic Schools, Principals have a responsibility to meet with teachers regularly for appraisal and evaluation. This trend reflects the thinking in the Green Paper (D.E.S., 1992). While my respondents accept the inevitability of externally based evaluation under the Education Act, 1998, they have mixed views on the role of the Principal in appraising the teacher's classroom performance. While departments and individual teachers have occasionally been queried about performance in examination results, classroom observation or discreet surveillance of teachers is perceived as a sanction for organisational deviance (Ball, 1987) and an erosion of status among colleagues and pupils. The predominant image of observation is of its operation in teacher training, which was judgmental rather than supportive. There is also 'uncertainty' (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989) about teacher effectiveness in the classroom and what constitutes good teaching:

Are you going to show me how to do it?

This comment from a History teacher, when I first discussed access to his classroom, reflects a prevalent attitude among teachers towards observation.

Teachers I interviewed point to the absence of any institutional recognition for effort or achievements (Huberman, 1993; Johnson, 1989). Instructional leadership is valued more through personal affirmation, appreciation and helpful advice than direct intervention in the classroom. While only one teacher discussed professional difficulties in subjective terms, teachers acknowledged that problems arise occasionally, but are ongoing for a number of experienced as well as beginning and supply teachers. The lack of supportive structures, fear of negative evaluation, pressure for early retirement and the traditional isolationism of Irish teachers (Drudy and Lynch, 1993) explain teachers' reluctance to seek help:

We are all struggling at times. If the support was here, if the overall management and ethos was right, then people might manage better. They could do the job as well as any of us, if they had the backup.

(Justin-Lower Corner)

However, teachers are anxious to conform to the institutional power vested in the Principal, but are conscious of the contingent and individualistic nature of classrooms:

I would certainly try, within limits, and accommodate what he is trying to say but obviously, you have to think about your situation in the classroom as well.

(Elsa-Music Group).

They feel the Principal lacks craft knowledge to direct subject teachers in their classroom pedagogy (Brandt, 1992).

Unless you had those subjects yourself you'd probably find it very difficult you couldn't do that, if you weren't qualified in it yourself I would get quite annoyed.

(Liza-Smokers)

This strategy of "accommodation and resistance" (Anyon, 1983) enables the teachers to maintain their 'elective individualism' (Hargreaves, 1994), but it also gives management the power to divide and rule (Smyth, 1991).

Kanter (1983) claims that teachers' power derives from the support and approval they receive in their daily activity. When I asked teachers to identify characteristics of effective Headship, they had explicit expectations of the Principal through his visibility, accessibility, problem solving and decisiveness, based on his trust in and support for their professional judgement and decisions. These characteristics, teachers claim, give legitimacy to them as professionals in front of pupils (Munn et al., 1992) and promote a 'logic of confidence', which builds a myth of teacher professionalism, generating confidence in the school by the wider community (Meyer and Rowan, 1988).

Where I worked before, the Principal was extremely loyal to his staff on all disciplinary matters. It paid off. The staff were loyal to him. It is twelve years since I worked there and I would go back tomorrow because of that one quality; he was always behind you no matter how small, ----any problems were sorted out there and then, and the teacher's point of view taken on board.

He should support you and be there to deal with pupils on the spot; they're put off and never dealt with; everything is passed on. He should be more active, more amenable, if you have a problem.

(Evelyn-Middle Group)

These expectations also cause dilemmas for Principals. Rosenholz (1989) claims that defending teachers in the face of unjustifiable circumstances can further alienate parents and pupils, while placating parents may be perceived as an abdication of responsibility, where teachers subsequently may not refer student problems to the Principal. He concludes that in effective schools, Principals

appeared to uphold teachers' instructional decisions and enforcement of school rules, largely because they are also their own. (p.129)

In Ireland, the Education Act, 1998 gives pupils the right of appeal against school decisions, therefore, Rosenholz's argument for a shared culture will have greater significance.

Teachers in this study made regular references to the impact of pupils' sub-cultures on their careers and sense of professionalism (Riseborough, 1985). They devise coping strategies of 'defensive teaching' (McNeil, 1986) to manage a growing number of disruptive and coerced clientele. They lower their demands and expectations in regard to pupil conduct, homework assignments, academic progress and examination performance. While these interviews were in progress, a local radio station aired parental concerns on incidents of bullying and

faction fighting among students. A subsequent drop in enrolment, with a corresponding student increase in neighbouring schools, crystallised teachers' belief that such incidents further eroded the school's reputation and their image as competent professionals.

When corporal punishment was abolished in 1982, schools were left to devise their own code of discipline, in line with D.E.S. guidelines on the suspension or expulsion of pupils. While the Board of Management uses these procedures, teachers feel the lack of transparency or consistency in their application erodes teacher autonomy and confidence in the education system. Teachers see management's commitment to the '*disadvantaged and marginalised*' (chapter 3) as unjustifiable rationalisation for tolerance of troublesome pupils:

This year we had incidents of sexual harassment; a teacher was physically assaulted; but these students came back.

(Nick-Oldies)

The ethos of pastoral care with the Mercy Order has gone too far. ----- We should draw back. This caring ethos has a ripple effect on the whole school; it is doing pupils no service .

(Mary-Smokers)

Summary

Status and professional identity are linked more to teachers' practice of professionalism within a school context, rather than that of 'professionalisation', as determined by government policy or public perception of teaching. In this sense, the History

teachers are no different from other subject teachers; but generational, gender and sub-cultural differences did lead to contrasting emphases when discussing the characteristics of professionalism. The nature of professional relationships will be explored in the next chapter, which examines the department context and the status of the History department within the hierarchy of subjects.

Chapter Six

The History Department

Introduction

The previous chapters examined the wider school contexts which shape teachers' perspectives. This chapter introduces the subject department and examines the History department's organisation, resources and status relative to other departments. It explores teachers' identification with the concept of department and investigates the nature of professional relationships in a department context.

I gathered data for this chapter through interview, observation and informal conversation with different subject teachers. I also wrote field notes following department meetings and noted the resources available to teachers in their classrooms.

Organisation and status.

St. Colman's subject departments operate as "loosely coupled" units (March and Olsen, 1976; Packwood and Turner, 1988), without formal structures or spatial boundaries. Although 62% of St. Colman's staff are female, there are distinct gender patterns in department demographics. English, Irish, Foreign languages, Mathematics, Science and Geography departments have predominantly female teachers. Art, Technology and P.E are exclusively male departments, and Home Economics exclusively female, which confirms Acker's (1983) findings that women tend to teach humanities and domestic subjects. Although half of the History teachers in the department are women, they are under represented in proportion to the predominantly female

composition of the staff. This suggests that History retains its image as a male centred subject (Turnbull et al., 1983). Ball (1987) and Siskin (1994) have identified the four most powerful departments as Maths, English, Languages and Science. In St. Colman's, the importance of Irish, English, Mathematics, is evident in the creation of three remunerated posts to co-ordinate and plan development programmes for these subjects. They also benefit from their academic tradition, and as compulsory examination subjects for Leaving Certificate and college entry, they have institutional appeal and national legitimacy (Goodson and March, 1996; Reid, 1984). The administrative structure of other departments resembles what Hargreaves and Macmillan (1995) call a 'moving mosaic' (Toffler, 1990), in that department Heads have no permanency and do not occupy remunerated middle management positions. Their role is one of co-ordinating, which confers nominal status and no formal authority. Although traditionally, the position was rooted in seniority, it is increasingly identified with subject involvement at honours level and with the reputation and influence of individual teachers.

The importance of the subject department as a form of social organisation was evident in the response to a questionnaire conducted by Drumcondra Education Centre, 1997. Only 56% of staff respondents agreed that school culture promoted personal development, only 36% felt valued, and 35% felt the school culture encouraged openness and participation. At the same time, 80% agreed that they had got a lot of help and support from department colleagues, while only 2% felt they never did. This sense of department exists, despite the absence of a statutory provision for such a structure.

The department is perceived by management as a useful internal division and a form of contrived collegiality (Siskin,

1994) to manage diversity in pupil population, staff numbers and subject choice:

a loose federalism that allows teachers to plan, co-ordinate and standardize their work for the house and state exams.

(Martin-Deputy Head).

However, the lines between specialism and generalism (Hargreaves, 1986) are blurred, as the majority of teachers teach two subjects, with a close match between qualifications and subjects taught.

The History department has eight teachers. Five of these, Martin, myself, Nick, Breda and Jerry are *Oldies*, Jack and Liza are *Smokers* and Elsa is a member of the *Music Group*. The department is one of the smallest in the school, although larger than some of the specialist departments such as Technology, Home Economics, Art and Music. Unlike these departments, the majority of whose teachers are specialists, History teachers also teach a range of other subjects, with History as a minor, rather than a primary teaching commitment. While I am the senior teacher, traditionally, Nick, as History co-ordinator, had charge of resources and was consulted by colleagues on matters relating to the department. Though teaching higher level Senior History rotated between us, his dominant role suggests that personality, popularity and micro-political capacities rather than age and experience can influence curricular and organisational policy (Ball, 1987), giving the individual teacher more clout and status (Beynon, 1985; Lacey, 1970).

Ball (1987), Siskin (1994) and Sparkes (1987) consider the department's position within the hierarchy of subjects as its main

status determinant. In the course of this investigation, the position of the History department has contracted. Due to the declining appeal of History at national and school level, Senior History is now reduced from three to two class groupings. Nick has been withdrawn entirely from History to become Senior Geography co-ordinator. I now co-ordinate Leaving Certificate History, but have been withdrawn from Junior History classes, while Breda has become Junior Certificate co-ordinator.

While Liza and Elsa acknowledge the Principal as the final arbiter on teacher deployment, they question older teachers' monopoly of Senior level History:

I think it is something that could be discussed and put to the Principal I could have Seniors, then somebody else let it rotate.

(Liza-Smokers)

They see the department as a possible leverage for change to a rotated system and dislike the growing ideology of management (Ball, 1987), which assumes control in the allocation of teachers and pupils rather than considering teachers' input, which was the norm in earlier years:

You could pick and choose, ----the teachers decided..... now when you get your timetable, lists have been drawn up by management.

(Elsa---Music)

Martin defends management's control over these important timetabling decisions:

At Senior level pupils take priority; only those teachers with a track record of good results, experience and commitment should be allowed.

Ball (1987), Siskin (1994) and Sparkes (1987) measure department strength by its solidarity and unity. In St. Colman's, the History department might at first appear as a 'bonded department' (Siskin, 1994). It has fully qualified personnel and a high level of stability (Johnson, 1990). There is a high level of consensus on the nature of the curriculum, but this is more dictated by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the textbook publishers, than the product of negotiation among the staff. While younger teachers lack positional power within the department or school hierarchy, they are gaining expertise in History teaching and assessment techniques through the correction of Junior Certificate Examinations, expertise which could be used for the benefit of all department members.

Early and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) and Goodson and Marsh (1996) suggest that departments should have regular meetings, evaluation and ongoing development. In the History department a brief, routine meeting is held at the commencement of each school year to select and co-ordinate curriculum content. The absence of any discussion on the nature of History, teaching, learning and assessment and the use, or allocation of resources, is an indicator of the department's limited administrative function and the constrained individualism (Hargreaves, 1994; Gutierrez, 1996) this generates. There is no provision for regular meetings *to appraise progress or identify problems*. No official statement is issued by the school authorities on department effectiveness or examination results relative to other subject departments,

which could be measured against the national performance scales issued by D.E.S. This pattern is evident in other subject areas like Business, Geography and Science, where conformity has replaced debate on the selection and ordering of subject content. The relative weakness of these departments contrasts with the clout of the Technology department (Ball, 1987; Siskin, 1994; Sparkes, 1987), where teachers have regular meetings to co-ordinate their budget and maximise their resources through annual reports to the Board of Management. Because Technology benefits from the Government's strategy to retain early school leavers within the education system, it also receives better funding and Inspectorate support.

When the new subject of Civic and Political Education was introduced, fears were expressed about threats to History's allocation on the timetable, but no concerted action occurred to defend the interests of the department. In this sense, the department is a fragmented unit, characterised by non-leadership (Siskin, 1994), where teachers work in isolation. I found that female History teachers are more willing to support collaboration, for assessment purposes, while male teachers tend to see collaboration as control (Smyth, 1991) and are more likely to exercise discretion in the selection of course content for teaching and assessment. Consequently, disagreements surfaced for two successive years, when female teachers allied against male colleagues (Paechter and Head, 1996b), forcing the redrafting of examination papers which did not conform to co-ordination schedules.

Bigger departments like English, Irish and Maths have twice yearly co-ordination sessions. The Principal occasionally attends these meetings, which are characterised by lengthy discussion on selection of textbooks, due to teachers' disagreements on subject paradigm (Ball and Lacey, 1980). Examination oriented teachers of senior higher level students are seen as carrying

most clout in the selection of course content and emphasis (Beynon, 1985; Lacey, 1970).

I strongly disagreed with the use of the same book for all classes, especially my remedial class, for whom it was patently inappropriate. I was not allowed prescribe a better book, more suited to their needs.

(John -retired)

While teachers make constant references to 'Head of department' in staff room conversation, in my discussions across various departments, I found teachers had a range of conceptions of the 'identity' and status of the role. Some saw the Head as the co-ordinator, the most senior teacher, or whoever teaches the subject at Leaving Certificate Higher Level. Breda, the senior Catechist, claimed:

We are all equals here,

but acknowledged her own leadership role in promoting her department's interests. It is clear that teachers value leadership, and a reference figure to act as a resource and mediator, but one who would at the same time respect their autonomy:

Somebody who is there to call meetings, to say, 'well this is a new video that we should get', to discuss issues about the course if we are not happy about aspects of the course it would be good if a school representative could contact the N.C.C.A.

(Liza, *Smokers*)

Martin has a more expansive conception of how a department Head should function. It contains elements of the British model,

which gives the Head control in monitoring, evaluating and facilitating professional development (Early and Fletcher-Campbell, 1989), but does not suppose observation of teachers or the exchange of ideas and feedback, which are recommended by Early and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) and Stokes (1981).

There are huge discrepancies in results. We desperately need someone to take responsibility, to advise and direct teachers on methodology. We need to look at different subject areas, get the teachers together and discuss how they teach. I get frequent complaints from children; they want another class, ---I know it's about the quality of teaching.

Liza rejects this model as restrictive of her developmental approach to her own professional learning:

Now if I was told by a Department Head, 'well, you can't do it this way', and I knew it worked, I would find that difficult. I am always learning. I might approach something differently this year than last year.

Other teachers share Liza's opposition to a hierarchical department system that weakens their professional autonomy:

A Head should be for organising resources, co-ordination and planning. I think it would be divisive among teachers to monitor or interfere in what is being covered.

(Nick-Oldies)

The threat to department relationships posed by monitoring is similar to that found by Early and Fletcher- Campbell (1989), which suggests that this aspect of a Head's responsibility is difficult to implement.

Ball (1987), Ball and Lacey (1980), Hargreaves (1980), Paechter and Head (1996b) and Riseborough (1981) suggest that a department's status is determined by school contexts, such as the goodwill of the head, allocation of resources, pupil clientele, staff recruitment practices, organisational restructuring and micro political relationships.

In St. Colman's, there is no accountability or transparency in the management and allocation of resources to subject departments. Only the Practical departments receive an annual budget allocation, and their teachers and students have access to computing and technical equipment; facilities not available to other departments. History teachers, like other teachers of academic subjects, see their department as seriously under funded and their subject's image still rooted in a chalk and talk mentality. Resources are not allocated to these departments per se, but to individual teachers, and depend on luck, opportunities and micropolitical skills, rather than on need or priority. Faced with these constraints, teachers have exercised different options in the management of the History curriculum. Male History teachers have used micropolitical strategies of acquiring resources in return for extra work, having a quiet word with the Principal or ancillary staff, when new resources become available:

The caretaker mentioned they were buying white boards, and so he promised me one. Another time, I

just ordered the books. I know some people get things because they are close to the Principal, and they asked him for overhead projectors. He gave me shelves for my room, but I had to put them up myself.

(Nick—*Oldies*)

Female History teachers have largely invested financially in their own resources, and their classrooms lack the technical equipment evident in those of male colleagues:

I would have textbooks, photographs and different things of my own that I would bring in, and different books that I have gathered along the way, different things that I found here and there that I allow the children to use.

(Elsa-*Music Group*)

Personal resources have become the tools of the teachers' trade, integral to their craft knowledge and an expression of their individuality and personal belief about the nature and value of History. Pedagogy is, therefore, the 'secret garden' in which teachers prefer to work in isolation:

I would have respect for my colleagues; I know that if I need to approach you or any of the other people in the department, I have no problem in doing that. I would find that, as a group of teachers, there would be good communication there, if we wanted.

(Liza-*Smokers*)

In St. Colman's, while there seem to be occasional incidents of collaboration through the sharing of handouts and exchange of

pupils' work in the bigger departments such as English and Irish, they are similar to the History department in that they lack the team spirit that Hill (1995) associates with strong subject departments.

Other factors also account for the "weak collegiality" (Hoyle and John, 1995) within the culture of the History department. The system of accountability and the status attached to examination results have fostered a competitive individualism (Smyth, 1991), where students' grades are carefully but discreetly scrutinised by teachers to evaluate colleagues' as well as their own performance. On results, the History department scores well relative to other departments, and while this pattern is reflected at a national level, it does enhance the status of History within a school context.

Teachers themselves are reluctant to evaluate peer performance in an open, structured manner and the intensification of work since the introduction of the Junior Certificate, without the support of in-service education, means teachers have few opportunities for either internal consultation or the stimulus of external agencies to aid professional growth. The isolation of the classroom, combined with administrative and timetabling complexities, means that teachers must rely on their social networks within the staff room for collegial support and assistance. The existence of five History teachers, including two married couples, within the *Oldies* might appear to facilitate a "collaborative partnership with like minded colleagues" (Siskin, 1994). However, the forging of such intimate alliances has fragmented the department into self sufficient sub-groups, who pool their own ideas and resources, so that collegiality at a

group or department level is essentially social, rather than professional (Rosenholtz, 1989).

Summary.

The History department, like many of the smaller academic departments, has a fragmented professional culture and lacks leadership, cohesion and clout. History teachers work largely in isolation, where competitiveness, rather than collaboration, prevails. While they would resist any form of mandated collegiality, they support selective collaboration that would enable them promote the interests of the subject. How History as a subject forms part of History teachers' biographies and identities will be explored in the next chapter, which provides insights into the personal contexts that shape their perspectives.

Chapter Seven

Biographies and Identities of History Teachers

Introduction.

While the previous chapter examined the organisational structure and the nature of professional relationships within the History department, this chapter explores personal and professional biographies of History teachers by mapping the socialisation process that introduced them to their subject and to teaching. It examines how their experiences have shaped and changed their identities as they move through different phases in their career life cycle.

Britzman (1992), Goodson (1992b) and Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) advise against taking teachers' identities for granted, or seeing teachers as *depersonalised products of their role and function*. In gathering data for this chapter, I did not introduce the concept of identity to teachers, but through discussion of their biographies from childhood, through all the issues pertinent to their work, their self images emerged. However, because they are History teachers, I endeavoured to establish its importance in their lives and career.

Socialisation

The History teachers in this case study, are experienced career teachers, who have spent the bulk of their careers in St. Colman's. For the majority, socialisation began in early childhood, where the family, the community and by extension the school, were powerful influences in their introduction to and affection for History. Each recalled either family conversations,

books, or trips to historical and archaeological sites, as the main stimuli that brought History alive for them. Female teachers spoke more of social history than male colleagues, who identified military or political influences of early childhood:

We talked an awful lot my mother would have been the greatest influence she told stories of our grandmother, a district nurse during the Black and Tans she was in Dublin herself when the bomb dropped.

(Liza-Smokers)

My grandfather -----he was explaining to us how a necklace he found was in the National Museum. My father, (school inspector) was always bringing us places, buildings, castles, bogs, telling us about the Emergency (1939-45).

(Elsa-Music Group)

My father was a garda (policeman). There was a weapons find belonging to the 1920's,--- we knew about the war; we saw the planes going over my grandmother's house in Strabane; it was a boarding house; sailors stayed there occasionally .

(Jerry-Oldies)

Martin, an islander off the west coast, grew up in a republican environment, where politics, history and myth were natural allies.

We had only one book -----about the Land League and the early republican movement I read it over and over he (father) always showed us his leg

injury ----he was captain of the local IRA unit.--- we
were known as the Captain's children.

National school mirrored the community's political and social milieu. Elsa, of middle class background, went to the local convent primary school. The nuns' preference for social history tapped into her imagination and reinforced a creativity already nurtured at home.

Other teachers had different experiences. Male Primary School teachers gave History an ideological and revolutionary perspective that reflected popular educational thinking at a time when the "national question" dominated Irish politics, and the 1916 rising was celebrated as a great national triumph (Lee, 1989).

You had your proclamation; you had to name them
(the rebels) off by heart.

(Lisa-Smokers)

Teachers also imposed an authoritarian regime in the classroom (Sugrue, 1996).

History was, getting out your book. He told you: point
no.1, write it down!, then point no.2; you learned it
off---if you didn't know your points you got
hammered.

(Nick-Oldies)

In secondary school, History remained largely textbook and content orientated. While a broader content touched on social and economic history, the political indoctrination characteristic of primary school had not entirely disappeared:

He taught History from an extreme republican
viewpoint, with a certain anti Britishness in it.- --He

was active in republican politics ----- This was the early seventies and the Northern troubles were going on-----he didn't advocate violence but he condoned it; to him, the I.R.A were heroes at the time; the British troops were the baddies.

(Nick---*Oldies*)

Rote learning without elucidation or elaboration left teachers with negative memories (Cole, 1985).

If my History was totally dependent on her, I don't think I'd be teaching History now.

(Elsa-*Music Group*)

She read the book; we listened; you had to have a pen to underline the words; you marked each point in the book; she explained it.

(Breda-*Oldies/Middle Group*)

In contrast, Liza attributes her love of History to excellent teaching at secondary school:

First of all she had great discipline; she had a great love for her subject; she made you work hard she praised you, she always talked and linked it with other things.

This image of good teaching endures for Liza and shapes her own craft knowledge (Cooper and McIntyre, 1996; Raymond et al., 1992). History teachers believe that background and family experiences were possibly more influential than school in their pursuit of History at third level. This is similar to the experiences of Humanities teachers I interviewed. However, it contrasts with

teachers of Mathematics, Technology and Science in this study, who attributed interest and subsequent studies in their subject to supportive and inspirational teachers at secondary level.

For my respondents, gender, home, background and limited opportunities (Sikes et al., 1985) were influential factors in becoming teachers. For university entrants in the nineteen sixties, teaching became inevitable as they proceeded through college and other career options diminished. Elsa and Martin experienced hiccoughs in their academic biographies (Sikes et al., 1985). Financial and family pressure led Martin into Arts, rather than Medicine, while Elsa opted for University, having failed to meet the academic requirements for Primary teaching. Jerry, like several of his older colleagues, started his academic career as a seminarian, and an Arts course seemed a natural progression. Nick, who entered University in the seventies, was more clearly focused on teaching as a career. Although Elsa's motivation was an 'ethic of care' (Gilligan, 1982), the majority of other teachers cited the ritual and sense of power and status they associated with teaching, as appealing factors in their career choice.

University graduates spoke of inspiring professors, who imparted a fondness for their subject. As in most British Universities at that time, the History course consisted of an outline syllabus assessed by written examination, and no training was provided in historical method or historiography (George, 1978; Steele, 1976). Neither was training provided in History teaching methodology in the Higher Diploma in Education, which confirms existing findings by Mardle and Walker (1980) and Zeichner et al. (1987), that university training is not a strong factor in the formation of classroom identity. My respondents' teaching strategies developed largely in the context of their classroom experiences and the images they framed of good teaching from

their own days as pupils (Cooper and McIntyre, 1996; Elbaz, 1983; Raymond et al., 1992).

University students in the 1960's had a more relaxed and stimulating academic environment than the students of later decades. Martin and Jerry became active in student and party politics. Martin's received version of nationalist orthodoxy was challenged, and Jerry's early memories of History were reactivated through the military orientation of its presentation:

I got involved with socialism and civil rights I joined the Labour Party..... I changed my views on History and Republicanism and how I was taught History.

(Martin-Oldies)

History and the army would have been very close with Professor Hayes Mc. Coy. You would go to Athlone Barracks; Mc. Coy had great influence there. -----I went to a lot of political meetings; it was the beginning of a new age; if you wanted to get into a job, you had to belong to a political party.

(Jerry -Oldies)

Their experiences contrast with those of younger History teachers, whose student days must be judged in their historical context:

We never had any free time, too much pressure of work to keep up.

(Breda-- Oldies/Middle Group)

I hadn't time to get involved, any free time was working or studying.

(Nick Oldies)

By the 1970's, free education had dramatically increased intake into third level colleges and created a competitive academic environment. Social development was now subordinated to the need to achieve honours degrees and compete in a contracting economic and jobs market. These graduates wanted to utilise their degree subjects, and teaching provided the only real opportunities (Lacey, 1977; Lyons, 1981). However, by the 1980's, financial cutbacks by the government reduced the numbers in teacher training courses, and teaching became a competitive profession to get into. These factors also increased the difficulties for graduates in getting jobs in education, and started the trend towards temporary employment (Drudy and Lynch, 1993).

There was a distinction between entrants to teacher training and to university. Training college graduates had a clear intention of becoming teachers. Lisa, Jack and Breda graduated from Mater Dei, a Catechetical Teacher Training College, which is church owned and controlled. While they were introduced to the 'New History', and the subject had a religious orientation, the predominant perspective was, as in the universities, on political history: cause and effect. Greater emphasis however, was placed on teaching methodology which supports claims by (Hargreaves, 1986), that graduates of teacher training colleges attach more status to child centred pedagogical skills than the possession of subject knowledge.

Roles and identities.

The ways in which teachers achieve, maintain and develop their identity, their sense of self, in and through a career, are of vital significance in understanding the actions and commitments of

teachers in their work. Identity is also a key to apprehending the divisions between teachers.

(Ball and Goodson, 1985, p.18.)

As two of the oldest teachers in St. Colman's, the biographies of Jerry and Martin reveal initial career satisfaction, punctuated by critical incidents, and career disappointment. They are now at the end of phase four, (40-50/55yrs) of their life cycle, which Sikes (1985) suggests is marked by reappraisal of identity, and changing attitudes. It can be a period of stagnation if the teacher suffers career disappointment. For these two teachers, the last decade, which brought imposed role redefinition, has created status uncertainty for them, yet, through situational readjustment (Woods, 1981), they try to retain a positive self image and identity.

Martin took up his appointment in 1966 and became Deputy Head in 1971. The enhanced status of this role coupled with the wider education provision in the 1970's and 1980's opened up leadership opportunities and the fulfilment of ideological concerns (Ball, 1987). In a religious run school, Martin perceived his role as an innovator and reference figure for those teachers, pupils and parents unable to identify with a church controlled school. Martin believes that his leadership role in St. Colman's, his political activism and History teaching over thirty years embodied his personal identity and professional fulfilment as a teacher. His involvement with Current Affairs and debating enabled students to experience and appreciate History as a resource they could enjoy beyond the instrumental requirements of the History syllabus.

Martin sums up his early years in teaching:

There was no pressure for exam results. I love talk, expounding--- education was more liberal in those days; you could really indulge yourself. I'm an ideas teacher. When I'm not driven by a prescribed course, I feel I can be inspirational. When I had to focus on results and do the nitty gritty, I felt I didn't perform.

Martin feels that now as Deputy Head, he must be seen to put his rhetoric on the importance of classroom instruction into practice, by meeting co-ordination guidelines and focusing on exam preparation:

Now I'm more a textbook person. The emphasis is on condensing information and getting the course covered.----- Now I check my results and see how I match up with my colleagues; you can't be seen to be falling below the standard.---- You must lead by example.

The pedagogical and professional implications of this preoccupation with coverage have been investigated by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) and Tye (1985) and will be explored in Chapter 8.

Martin also believes his socialist principles and his own background of social deprivation, emigration and unemployment (Goodson, 1991e), is an influential factor in developing his more focused academic orientation:

Children from deprived backgrounds often lack opportunities and motivation, so the school must provide the structures and the environment that help these kids make the most of their ability. ---No effort should be spared to cultivate ambition and push children.

Martin believes that the style of management which evolved since the appointment of a lay Principal in 1993, has altered his role and power base (Halstead, 1998;Maguire, 1993). His *perceived diminution in status has reaffirmed the importance of the classroom as a means of professional fulfilment and a relief from the frustrations of his role:*

For eight hours I feel I am doing something worthwhile, more than just signing notes and giving out to students, I feel I know where I'm going, I can achieve more.

The difficulties in defining and fulfilling the role of Deputy Head have been explored by Ribbins (1997). Mortimore et al. (1988) also show how the involvement of the Deputy Head in the decision making process is characteristic of the more effective school. Since this investigation began, the status of Deputy Head has been elevated, with increased remuneration and management responsibilities, and classroom contact reduced to four hours per week. Despite the upgrading, Martin feels his role as a decision maker is eroded by the Principal's unilateral style of leadership, which pays lip service to the notion of team management. The ideological divisions between them on their definition of the school, its purpose and direction, add to Martin's difficulty in identifying with St. Colman's, as a school he was once proud to work in. Martin has abandoned his extra curricular

involvement in school debating, and regrets that his younger colleagues have less enthusiasm for the tradition he fostered. While this slowing down is part of the ageing process (Sikes, 1985), it also reflects the demands of his managerial role and marks a reappraisal of his career and identity.

Harvey (1994) and Ross (1995) see a role for Deputy Heads, as the culture bearers for the Principal. Lawley (1988) shows how normal tensions arise between Principals and their Deputies, but Ross (1995) claims a symbiotic relationship is essential to effective management. In St. Colman's, my respondents believe the management team lacks unity of purpose or shared vision, essential for consistency in implementing school policy. Martin conveys his sense of frustration and resignation:

I have a feeling of gloom that nothing will turn the tide, ----- We won't make the hard decisions to deal severely with trouble makers or support teachers with classroom difficulties. -----Everyone does their own thing. I will stick this for three years at most. I would be gone earlier, if I got a decent retirement deal.

Jerry has much in common with Martin. In their mid fifties, both are moving into the last phase of their life cycle, when, as (Sikes, 1985) claims, there is a readiness for early retirement, which for these two teachers is constrained largely by financial circumstances:

If you decide that, despite your good relationships with students or colleagues, it is time to go, then perhaps the sooner the better.----- When you pass a certain stage in life, it does not matter what suits the

school, it is what suits me. Financially: yes, if you can afford it; healthwise I can you afford to stay on?

(Jerry-Oldies)

Jerry came to St. Colman's in 1971 as an experienced teacher, who wished to return to his own community to live and work. In teaching English and History, he endeavoured to make them into living subjects through drama, visits to historic sites, and participation in Local History projects:

We would do one acts in the classroom, such as Martin Luther as the anti hero; it went off well; you could say to a colleague, 'Is your class doing anything now? do you want to come and watch some theatre?'-----It is easier to write on life in a medieval castle if you visit one of these places.

In the 1980's, management constraints forced Jerry to curtail what were considered peripheral academic pursuits, and prioritise curriculum and textbook History. In adjusting his pedagogical style to meet changing education priorities, Jerry's perspective, like Martin's, highlights the links between life history and curriculum history and the contextual constraints in which they operate (Goodson and Walker, 1991a).

I miss those days. Even though there was an examination at the end, you had more confidence in yourself and your kids. In the exams you wouldn't be getting 'A' s or 'B's' ; in those days that didn't count. History was a joy up to Inter Cert. -Now there are so many targets that you don't have an all round education. Then came the Saturday² rule: you couldn't go out during the week unless for a specific purpose----the last overnight tour I did was five to six years ago, --If you had the same class for both

English and History you could hold debates, pageants, plays; you can't do that anymore, unless you're prepared to give up your after hours. At a certain stage in life that's an impossibility.

Jerry's role as Captain in the Local Defence Forces, his interest in party politics, his resemblance to Churchill in stature and demeanour, create an image of authority and gravitas among his colleagues and with pupils. Like Mr.Pickwick in John Beynon's (1985) comprehensive school study, his individualistic pedagogical style occasionally creates tensions with colleagues in the English and History departments and with management. While more aloof than other '*activists*' (Baldridge, 1971) among the *Oldies*, his trade union activism, resolute articulation and defence of his interests, produced conflict with successive Principals:

I would have been in conflict with three Principals. We need to be more pro-active. As trade unions, we have to do what is best for our members--- it's best to start from that position.

His role and identity have changed over time. Junior colleagues in the English and History departments replaced him at Senior level, and his qualifications as remedial teacher are not utilised. His failure and that of his senior colleagues to gain promotion to Deputy Head in 1996, adds to Jerry's conviction that management favours more compliant younger staff. However, Jerry has found compensatory niches that sustain his self image. His new role promoting school golf gives him a profile among the pupils and compensates for the constraints of a classroom focused curriculum. Despite failed attempts at career diversification, his public responsibilities as tutor at trade union

² Teachers not permitted to take pupils on field trips during school time.

seminars enable Jerry sustain a commitment to teaching and a profile among teaching colleagues:

Generally speaking, I am satisfied with teaching. You cannot have satisfaction unless there is dissatisfaction. School is like a family: you run through the gamut of emotions, successes and failures.

For younger teachers, the establishment of identity is a different process. While Nick and Breda came straight from college, Jack, Lisa and Elsa started as temporary teachers in other schools. They were among the last staff in St. Colman's to get permanent positions, when initially appointed. The Irish Government's Green Paper (DES, 1992) states:

that newly registering teachers must teach their final year degree subjects, for at least half of their timetabled hours. (p. 165)

This emphasis on subject expertise was established practice in St. Colman's by the 1980's, and these teachers signed contracts to teach their degree subjects. My respondents believe that these requirements confer status on subject qualifications (Hargreaves, 1986) and an entitlement to teach them at all levels. They prefer the variety of teaching two or more subjects, which conforms to a restricted kind of generalism (Hargreaves, 1986), where interest extends beyond one subject, but is located in a particular field of knowledge. This fosters cross cultural links between subjects and unification of perspectives on pedagogy. Their ability to draw and utilise parallels between two subjects within a broad discipline enables them to sustain commitment and enthusiasm (McNamara, 1991).

I think, regardless of what subject you are qualified in, you need to teach two subjects.----- In Religion we study various different churches and their formation; in History we have done the Reformation. On issues of justice we look at the Inquisition in History.

(Liza-Smokers)

I like teaching both History and Geography to Senior level, but I'm getting a bigger slice of Geography.

(Nick-Oldies)

Their careers have now reached the latter stages of phase three (30-40 age group) of the teacher life cycle, which Sikes (1985) claims, is a settling down period, when identities are well established, teachers reach their peak and come to terms with the reality of their careers. They have experienced no major career setback, or role redefinition, but gender differences emerge in their career patterns. Sikes (1985) suggests that family commitments for women may make teaching a secondary consideration. While the demands of family life have constrained Lisa's and Breda's careers, an analysis of their career paths suggests that they are in search of identities that will confer status and a realisation of self image. As graduates from Mater Dei, they are employed primarily as Catechists. They are not happy with their contracted identities as Catechists and have sought institutional recognition as Senior History teachers:

I asked twice that I would like Senior History, but I lost a History class this year.

(Liza-Smokers)

Religious Education is not providing the career fulfilment and status that these teachers need. This subject finds itself in a paradoxical situation of 'status contradiction' (Paechter and Head, 1996a). A compulsory subject, it is firmly embedded in the philosophy of the school, but lacks external legitimisation (Reid, 1984), in that it is not an examinable subject in the national curriculum. Breda argues that the rhetoric of the school philosophy is not matched by practical commitment. Only four of the 21 teachers in the Religious Education department are qualified Catechists, three of whom are History teachers. Representations to the Board of Management for more qualified personnel have been ignored. This situation prompted Breda to comment:

It is not low status we have, but no status.

The low status of Religious Education has led Catechists to reassess their career options within the school. Their desire to teach more History classes has implications for other History teachers. Their accommodation in junior level History has reduced the subject's allocation to others in the department. Breda, who has three children, is uninterested in an objective career structure, but her ambitions as a subject teacher have secured her position as a Senior History teacher, while Nick reluctantly takes on more Senior Geography. Liza, recognising that teachers have to wait in line to ascend the hierarchy (Siskin, 1994), opted for career diversification (Huberman, 1993) in remedial education and resocialisation (Paechter, 1993b) into Civil and Political Education. However, changed family circumstances forced the abandonment of her diploma course in remedial education, and the birth of her third child has restricted her professional development to the school context.

Jack, Liza's husband, is also a Mater Dei graduate and teaches Senior Religion and Junior History. He would prefer more History classes, but is content with his present status. Jack differs from his male History colleagues in that History does not foster any political interest or involvement. His identity is tied up with soccer at school and national level as Assistant Manager to the Ireland under 18 team. '*Pacing myself*' is Jack's approach to his work, which suits his busy soccer schedule. Without any posts of responsibility, Jack and Lisa are distant if not 'apathetic' (Baldrige, 1971) to much of school business. Like many of the younger teachers in the *Singles* and *Newcomers* group, they don't equate professional commitment with the necessity of heavy involvement in school affairs (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991), yet maintain a commitment to the classroom. Their non engagement is also strategic, as evident in their reluctance to discuss management issues in the course of this investigation.

Unlike the Catechists, Nick and Elsa have well established identities within the school. Music permeates Elsa's personal life and perspective on her subjects:

Music mixes up the three subjects I have in my degree. You have a big section in Irish music; you are drawing on parts of Irish culture and language, and parts of Irish history when you are dealing with the Renaissance you always link into music.

Music is the smallest department in the school, yet it holds an elite status. It attracts middle class and predominantly female pupils, whose commitment to the subject epitomises their academic and personal lives. The marginality of Music is expressed in the department's physical distance from the main school building (Siskin, 1994). Its isolation necessitates Elsa's frequent absence from the staff room and perhaps explains her

rare involvement in staffroom discussion and reluctance to challenge the realities of the workplace, or the Principal's definition of the school. However, Blase (1989) and Lortie (1975) claim that teaching attracts people with a conservative orientation; a possibility Elsa herself acknowledges:

My theory is: he is the Principal and the buck stops with him, both in dealing with me and the children. Maybe I should challenge him a bit more, but it has to do with the way I was brought up or the way I have been used to different people in authority. If he says it's ok, then it's ok; that's the end of the story. I might agree with him, I might disagree with him, but he is the Principal.

While History influences are present in her biography, Music is fundamental to Elsa's self image and professional identity. Her role as Musical Director in the school musical confers status and public recognition, but, it is from teaching music, rather than music per se, that Elsa derives greatest satisfaction. Music, more than History or Irish, facilitates self-realisation (Hargreaves, 1994) and an individualised relationship with her pupils:

In Music you are working with smaller groups, and it is really very, very individual attention and you really get around the children that you have in your class.

As with Elsa, Nick's socialisation, his ideological and subject orientation bring a particular micropolitical perspective to his workplace. In terms of career structure Nick, aged forty, is a 'successful' teacher (Sikes, 1985). However, as an Assistant Principal, he does not identify with a management role as defined by the school authorities. Like other teachers among the

'Oldies', he believes 'activism' is a measure of a teacher's commitment. He resents being branded as negative by colleagues in other groups (Ball, 1987).

Some staff would see me as very anti- or negative because I speak my mind too much at times.

Having accumulated a considerable array of History resources, his classroom is a resource centre for History teachers. His management role gives him responsibility for the co-ordination and supervision of staff technical resources. These roles give Nick a strong staffroom profile, as he mediates between teachers and management. As Union steward and member of its central executive, he upholds Union directives, but feels this promotes a negative image with management:

Previous union stewards were there to calm everything and keep things running the way management wanted. I saw my role as making sure the union rules were followed, and that led to conflict. Most of my differences with the Principals have been on school policy; being school steward definitely doesn't lead to a good working relationship.

Although an 'activist' (Baldrige, 1971), Nick admits to employing tactics of ingratiation (Blase, 1988b) to secure his promotion and protect his interests. His political approach contrasts with that of his wife, Breda, who conventionally relied on the power of argument at staff meetings to promote her ideological views. However, her strong opinions on traditional teaching and discipline led to *confrontations with management* and a sense of victimisation at the hands of 'coercive power' (Johnson and Short, 1998).

In interviews and in staffroom conversations, she constantly emphasises the career advantages of playing the game and

survival at work (Blase, 1988b, 1989) through practising avoidance techniques and self reliance; an attitude Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) see as symptomatic of a culture of individualism. However, despite her attempts at maintaining a situated identity, Breda's substantial self re-emerges periodically, sustaining a cycle of confrontation and retreat. In this sense Breda contrasts with others among the *Oldies*, whose strategic withdrawal is rooted in a weariness induced by conflict and tactics of contrastive rhetoric (Hargreaves, 1984b) employed by management:

I am apathetic about graffiti, bad language, bad behaviour ---because the system says if there is a problem you have caused it-----we are constantly told that things are worse in other schools. I believe in non involvement in things.-- I just turn the other way on the corridor and pretend I don't see; people look after themselves.

(Sandy-*Oldies*)

Hargreaves (1991) and Woods (1984b) argue that many teachers perceive themselves as specialists. Becher (1989) claims membership of a subject association, and contributing articles to professional journals enhance identity and status. History teachers in this study do not see themselves as historians, but as subject teachers, who try to promote a love of History as well as delivering the curriculum. They are not members of the History Teachers' Association, or any local historical group, but occasionally attend History conferences and read History journals. However, for most of them, History is more than just a textbook experience, but involves related pursuits that utilise their historical skills and training:

History drew me into politics. It gives you a different view of things. One wouldn't be biased, but History helps you see the waffle in politics. You look at the twenties and the foundation of the state, the role of De Valera---it helps you see things more critically.

(Nick-Oldies)

A lot of people have a scant knowledge of History. Once they find out you are a History teacher they expect you to fill in the gaps. It puts you in a very comfortable position, if you can explain to people the origin of a current problem

(Martin-- Oldies)

Becher (1989), Head (1980) and Hudson (1967) establish a link between personality type and subject orientation, while Thomas (1990) has shown that subjects are stereotyped with strong masculine or feminine identities. Hargreaves (1988) argues that subject loyalty can promote intolerance of other fields of knowledge, while Becher (1989) Lacey (1977) and Sikes et al. (1985) argue that belonging to a subject community leads to a 'collective philosophy' that embraces teachers' personal and professional lives.

History teachers in St. Colman's reject the notion of a stereotypical subject teacher, yet believe that History teachers as a group in St. Colman's have their own sub-cultural identity:

We have so many different personalities; but we are willing to speak our minds on a lot of topics. In History you are looking at cause and effect; you are picking out reality from propaganda. You take nothing at face value; you are likely to discuss it and look at the alternative. A History teacher has to be

questioning and that translates into your normal view of things.

(Nick-Oldies)

I would say they are people who seek the truth.--- History is asking questions. People outside interpret their quest for information and all that as maybe conspiratorial.----Teachers here with a History background, like your self, Sandy, Bill³ , Nick, Jerry, Martin; I see similar characteristics in your thinking and approach, your lack of fear, taking risks.

(Breda -Oldies/Middle Group)

I think History teachers are more serious minded, more thoughtful, more critical,-- solid ---have a great deal of commitment outside of school in politics, Third World issues and social action.

(Martin-Oldies)

Margaret, a science teacher (*Middle Group*), has a similar view as History teachers on teachers' relationship with their subject, and believes that science has its own sub-culture, which shapes a distinct identity and craft knowledge for its teachers:

I'm a teacher, not a scientist-----I have no time to do research because of domestic responsibilities. Science is a subject of facts, it is exact and defined, so I don't get to know pupils personally. I am very distant, as we would have no discussion, whereas in English and History, you would probably read round and discuss the subject.

³ Bill is a member of the *Oldies*, and although he is a Geography teacher, he also studied History at University.

Summary

History teachers have reached the latter stages of either phase three or phase four of their career life cycle. Ageing, career experiences, and changes have altered their identities and perspectives. Childhood and family background are important influences in their socialisation into History as a subject. They do not see themselves as academics, yet much of their lives is lived out through the subject, which they believe has its own sub-culture and craft knowledge gained through experience rather than training. How this craft knowledge influences teachers' perspectives on the curriculum and their pedagogy in the classroom will be explored further in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight

History Teachers and the History Curriculum

Introduction

The previous chapter described how History teachers' socialisation and career experiences shaped their identities and craft knowledge. This chapter explores their perspectives on the History curriculum by looking at the historical contexts in which the curriculum developed and how teachers' views on the subject, their experience and situational constraints influence their pedagogical approaches.

Data for this chapter was gathered through interview, questionnaire and classroom observation. Questionnaires were used to establish the type of resources and teaching strategy used by teachers and to form a backdrop to interviews. The difficulties in establishing how teachers practise their craft knowledge are acknowledged in chapter two. Most History teachers were interviewed twice on their craft knowledge. The first interview was to establish teachers' views on the nature of the Junior Certificate History course, classroom management and organisation. The second interview was more specific to pedagogy and the teaching strategies used in particular lessons. Observation took place in eight thirty five minute lesson periods of each of two teachers over a school year. I focused on classroom organisation, the learning environment, teaching/learning strategies, gender differentiation and use of resources. I wrote field notes during some of these classes on the nature and content of teacher/pupil interaction. These

fieldnotes were used to follow up issues in the subsequent interview and to support or establish if a correlation existed between the accounts teachers were giving of their craft knowledge and their practise in the classroom.

Context of the History curriculum

It is important to document the evolution of the History curriculum in order to understand the rationale behind the current History curriculum in terms of official policy and the teachers' interpretation of that policy. Hirst and Peters (1970) saw subjects as having intrinsic features, which are non-negotiable, but Ball (1983), Ball and Goodson (1984), Bernstein (1971), Cooper (1984), Goodson (1983,1988b), Musgrove (1968), and Young (1971) suggest that subjects are socially constructed, as power groups struggle to define and prioritise their interests. In the case of History, a coalition of the Universities, the Royal Historical Society and teacher groups defined History as a subject and shaped the direction it was to take (Batho, 1986).

In nineteenth century Ireland, History content was British and colonial. Ireland had two cultures: one predominantly Gaelic; Catholic and Nationalist, the other, Anglo-Irish; Protestant and Unionist. Therefore, religion and politics had an ideological impact on the History curriculum for well over a century (Callan, 1986;Farren, 1995;Holohan, 1994; Walsh,1986). While in Britain, History promoted imperialism (Marsdon, 1989), in Ireland, History was associated with fervent nationalism (Walsh, 1986). After the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, the focus was on the assertion of independence and legitimating the state through the appeal to History (Holohan, 1994).

In Britain, by the 1960's there were fears about History's survival, amidst reports about boring content and teaching methodology (Booth, 1969; Price, 1968). In Ireland, debate focused on ideology and the brand of nationalism it invoked (Harkness, 1976; Hayes McCoy, 1962; Holohan, 1994; Murphy, 1973). In Britain, the 'New History' movement emphasised the methodology of the historians and skills over content (Jones, 1973; Patrick, 1987) and generated a bitter debate about content and rationale (Husbands, 1996; John, 1991; Phillips, 1992). In Britain, the 'Final Report' (D.E.S., 1990) which preceded the National Curriculum, endeavoured to marry the two traditions. In Ireland, the New Junior Certificate Programme 1989, emphasised concepts, research and evidence as well as content (Crowley, 1990; N.C.C.A., 1990).

Craft knowledge in the classroom

There are high levels of homogeneity among the History teachers in this case study on the nature of History and how they teach it. While there are variations in their perspectives, teachers construe their subject in classified terms (Bernstein, 1971). At different times in the course of the interviews they referred to History:

as 'a body of facts', 'coverage of content' , 'I think it is important that every child knows the true facts', 'you have to gear them towards the exam', 'you think and talk in exam terms', 'it is always there in the classroom'.

Goodson and Mangan (1995) and Stodolsky (1988) found that History had traditional formal class teaching, dominated by content and teacher talk. History teachers in St. Colman's organise their classes in a formal manner, which they see as creating an orderly working environment and maintaining

discipline. While there are variations in what teachers do, I found the beginning of class periods were usually marked by some form of ritual to settle the pupils down to work. Pupils generally worked in isolation, at desks assigned to them at the beginning of the school year. Desks are organised in rows, with the teacher's desk centre front, ---an arrangement usually associated with a didactic model of teaching (Perry, 1993).

They are assigned to their seats and sit there every day. They go immediately to their desk and take out their books; it's important to get them into a pattern. I don't allow them to shout at me or talk together: they must raise their hand and wait until I ask them a question.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Group)

Lesson introductions comprise a brief exposition, recalling key points from the previous lesson and indicating the topic or concept to be covered in the lesson in hand. The textbook is the key focus and main reference point for teachers and pupils (Lee, 1994). Topics are followed in line with the chapter sequence to meet co-ordination targets for house and state exams. Note dictating is used occasionally when the textbook content is considered inadequate to answer examination questions. Extra materials introduced are largely for assessment purposes rather than sources to widen pupils' capacities to interpret or make judgement between sources. Teachers are conformist and instrumental in their approach, as in simplifying the content of the textbook, explaining and expanding, so that the child's familiarity with the text ensures success in examinations (Mc Neil, 1986). Teachers differ on the use of reading tasks. Some teachers have abandoned reading aloud by teacher or pupil as a barren activity (Garvey and Krug, 1977). Others felt that reading

by pupils was time consuming because the language of the textbook posed problems for weaker pupils who:

already have difficulties in literacy, spelling, punctuation -- that is desperately important in History if the children are struggling with that, maybe in English, they are going to struggle with it in History as well.

(Elsa-Music Group)

The importance teachers attach to literacy skills (Curtis and Bardwell, 1994) is reflected in the pedagogy they adopt in the classroom:

I read. They have a ruler and a pen. I tell them to mark a word and I give them a simple word for it, so they can make sense out of the sentence. We do that paragraph by paragraph. Then I put questions on the board, or they take the questions out of the book.

(Breda-Oldies/Middle Group)

Imparting knowledge and understanding is the main priority, and teachers do not seem to have the teaching of historical skills as an explicit objective. However, this objective is integral to their tacit knowledge. This became apparent when teachers' opinions were sought on different aspects of the Junior Certificate course. They prefer teaching History as "enquiry", using primary sources of pictures and documents, where students can reconstruct their own accounts from the evidence (Shemilt, 1980). These questions require more than just factual recall: they encourage pupils to produce their own novel solutions rather than supply absolute answers. Teachers also like 'People in History' topics,

an approach which allows students practise empathy and encourages a creative, imaginative response:

very positive towards the student: you're testing their ability to comprehend using the child's imagination, with the clues that are given for the People in History; they are helping the child or prodding the child in the correct way.

(Elsa-Music Group)

However, from my classroom observation, I found that this view of History has only limited application in practice, in that pupils are reminded to concentrate on the facts of History, are not presented with two accounts of the same event, or asked to look for bias, or question its content or reliability, which are critical to historical knowledge (MacIsaac, 1996).

Topic development, based on concepts, personalities and events within a chronological framework, is designed to challenge the higher level student. The existence of mixed ability classes, containing Higher and Ordinary level students is unpopular, as it requires setting and assessing different tasks for pupils. Teachers believe this slows the pace of the lesson and adds to the problems of managing the learning process, at the same time as meeting coverage deadlines.

Teachers are concerned, not just about the cognitive aspects of children's learning: affective considerations were also apparent (Cooper and McIntyre, 1996; Sikes et al., 1985). They were anxious that pupils would enjoy and have a positive attitude towards the subject. Discipline was important, but had to be balanced against the need for an environment that enabled children to participate and interact with the teacher. Some teachers spoke about the need to make their lessons interesting through discussion, and getting pupils to think about the issues

and articulate their opinions. Teacher talk, unless it scaffolds pupil learning, can inadvertently shut down pupil engagement (Husband, 1996; Partington, 1980). My observation and teachers' own accounts, however, suggest that it is the most frequently used teaching strategy. While some teachers pointed to the value of story telling to promote interest and the use of analogy to relate the topic to the child's own existing knowledge and experience, talk was used extensively for information and explanation in a transmission mode of teaching. The strategies some teachers described had many of the characteristics of 'social constructivism' (Bruner, 1966; Vygotsky, 1962) as outlined by Wood (1988), but they were unfamiliar with these theories and had no theoretical model of teaching /learning to shape or structure their lessons.

Classroom observation showed that discussion was largely teacher initiated and controlled. While occasional questions were rhetorical or extrapolative in character, the majority were 'recall', 'comprehension' and 'interpretation' questions, which required on the spot answers that denied pupils an opportunity, or the time, to challenge or develop their thinking skills. Time was usually given to start homework assignments, where pupils had to answer questions by locating information, interpreting, translating and condensing it in note form. While teachers intend these exercises primarily to maintain pupils' concentration at the end of the class, they did bring variety and independent learning to the lesson and gave a period of quiet reflection, which promotes critical thinking and understanding (MacIsaac, 1996). Teachers make occasional use of videos and overhead projectors, but the lack of suitable resources results in an over reliance on textbook pictures and illustrations, which were generally deemed too diminutive to enliven the subject. Although teachers claim that, occasionally, their pupils work in groups, and classroom walls are covered with projects, I found that these

are mainly done as homework assignments, because group work is seen as too time consuming, and difficult to organise and manage within the normal class period of thirty five minutes.

As well as noting differences in pupils' literacy and comprehension skills, teachers were alert to pupils' strategic adaptation, and to how gender plays a part in the way pupils experience and define classroom tasks (Murphy 1989).

The girls would be far more vocal; they say what they think and mean written work definitely for the majority of girls is better with the boys you get very short answers they minimise the answers so much: they have to have thought about it. if a boy answers out in class somebody might think he's teacher's pet.

(Liza-Smokers)

While these perceptions might appear to negate Stanley's (1993) research on girls, classroom observation revealed a higher quality and number of interactions initiated by teachers with male pupils (French and French, 1993). This observation, coupled with teachers' own observation on gender differences, suggests that teachers rely on girls' spontaneous involvement in lesson tasks, whereas boys must be directly engaged to maintain their interest. While classroom observation of teacher/pupil interaction was not systematic, the data shows that, generally, less than half the pupils were involved in teacher /pupil interaction, an activity Husbards (1996) considers as an effective pedagogic strategy.

While teachers could identify problem areas for students and had developed teaching strategies to deal with them, they

seemed less assured when coping with pupils' opinions that touched on sensitive political historical issues:

Well, when it comes to Unionism and Nationalism and things like that, you would hear maybe the odd comment; you're not supposed to hear, but you are supposed to hear. Now, I don't allow that. I always say to them: 'we have to look at the events: what your views are, is one thing, but you can't go shouting them around the class'. I would be very strict on that: you teach it as it stands.

(Lisa-Smokers)

This form of 'indirect expression' (Maw, 1994) is a common characteristic of ethnocentric attitudes. As values are likely to be formed at an early age, attempts to shut down pupils' opinions could be counter productive (Hannam, 1978; Mc Neil, 1986). The teachers believe that History should promote critical thinking and independent judgement and that they would not impose a fixed view. However, Elsa's reported classroom strategy seems contradictory to these objectives:

This is not the forum to express your own opinion; you are entitled to it, but, really and truly, this is what you are expected to produce.

(Elsa-Music Group).

Mc Neil (1986) sees attempts to socialise students into consensus History as part of the 'defensive teaching strategies' practised in American state schools, where teachers control students by controlling content. While these attitudes among my respondents reflect their need to maintain control, there is also an awareness that pupils will bring misconceptions, ignorance

and prejudice into the classroom, especially in the context of Northern Ireland (Austin, 1992). While teachers believe they challenge pupils' misconceptions, Elsa and Liza did so only in the context of the textbook as the official version, rather than exploring the issues and allowing pupils to examine their own values in a relaxed, open manner. Because N.C.C.A. members act as authors and advisors to book publishers, teachers are anxious to use texts that reflect the thinking of the N.C.C.A. This generates an ideological conformity that leaves little to teacher discretion (Apple, 1986).

Tripp (1993) claims that under a centralised curriculum, teachers will adhere to the predominant cultural values generated by a state system, and that difficulties in handling 'critical incidents' reflect a lack of professional autonomy. Teachers in this study see their approach as more influenced by time constraints, which inhibit explorative discussion. They are also mindful of how political attitudes in the past have been attributed to defective History teaching (Murphy, 1973). Martin recalls how his explorative, analogical approach led to a complaint to the school authorities about his anti-nationalist, revisionist perspective. Elsa, when confronted with a sensitive historical/political issue referred the matter to the school authorities rather than confront it in the classroom. Values education requires social skills, insights and access to teaching strategies, historical sources and resources (Austin, 1992) that are not readily available, and teachers may fear that in the community context in which they teach, comments, however well intentioned are open to misinterpretation and repercussions beyond the classroom.

Teachers put different emphases on the value of History in the school curriculum, indicating its utilitarian value for jobs and for leisure, but the predominant perspective upheld the traditional view of history, which is to give pupils knowledge and

understanding of their heritage and the political and social systems that shape their lives (Holohan, 1993; Partington, 1986). Teachers' views on the value of History are reflected in their preference for particular content, however, all agreed that modern contemporary History is the most relevant, appealing and comprehensible to pupils (Wilson, 1992).

In Ireland, content selection is controversial (Crowley, 1990), though not as divisive as in Britain (Austin, 1990). It is clearly prescribed, covering local, national, European and the wider world and presented as patch studies, structured in a chronological way from pre-history to the present time. Teachers in this study re-echo the reservations by Garvey (1989) on the long chronological span the course covers, because it puts inordinate demands on them to cover large chunks of content, where regurgitation of memorised information seems more relevant than understanding of or enthusiasm for the subject itself (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Tye, 1985). The time constraint of three classes per week further inhibits the teachers' approach and undermines their efforts to build up goodwill towards the subject at Senior level:

It turns students off, because there is just so much to do.

(Liza-Smokers)

The N.C.C.A. decision to shorten the course in 1997 was generally welcomed, but the lack of consultation on the deletions was an irritant:

I look at the changes coming in and I'm so annoyed over that, well! The sections they deleted you know! Deleting the Treaty of Versailles! How can you do World War Two without that?

(Liza -Smokers)

The failure of the N.C.C.A. to provide a rationale for these changes in the context of the overall course will increase existing reservations and further weaken teachers' identification with the rhetoric of the Junior Certificate. The 'History Guidelines for Teachers' (N.C.C.A., 1990) outline the content and rationale of the course, and, while not prescriptive, they provide suggestions on what methodology and resources could be effective. Teachers rarely consult the document, but tend to teach to the examinations and ignore its more innovative recommendations for the use of a critical and experimental approach to teaching.

Delamont (1983), Drudy and Lynch (1993) and Larson (1987) found that teachers were reluctant to abandon didactic approaches, for ideological and practical considerations. Practical constraints in St. Colman's range from the lack of History resources to difficulties with field trips and the non availability of in-service education or Inspectorate support to provide professional development. In these circumstances, the teachers rely on practical experience and reshape the course to suit their own priorities (Ball and Bowe, 1992; Olsen, 1980; Sparkes, 1987). They also believe that the ideological emphasis on content, rather than skills in the examination, inhibits its appeal and development as a utilitarian subject (Holohan, 1993).

I think it is perceived as a very bookish type of subject. Other subjects are bringing in more skills; oral, aural and practical skills. History remains very much textbook, writing and answer. It doesn't tap into their ability to use a computer or to do a long term project.

(Elsa-Music Group)

Summary

Because teaching is geared towards examinations, teachers view History largely as a body of knowledge rather than as a discipline where they practise historical skills. They are also constrained by the demands of course content, lack of resources and training. Teachers use primarily a transmission model of teaching, but rely on their own experience and intuition to tailor their methodology to meet the needs of their pupils.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions

The data presented in the previous chapters has given voice to a group of teachers by identifying and addressing the questions they believe are relevant to their careers and professional identities. This chapter selects the various themes that emerge from the data and examines their theoretical implications. These themes revolve around the social, historical, micropolitical and professional contexts that contribute to teacher perspectives. The data on History teachers' biographies, subject department and curriculum bring together both the subjective and objective aspects of teachers' careers and establish further links between their careers, identities and perspectives. This case study suggests that *perspectives are not given or reified, but change and develop in relation to different contexts that influence how teachers construct, interpret and act out their identities*. While these contexts are linked to macro forces that shape education policy and the changing nature of workplace conditions, this investigation is essentially an interactionist study of how perspectives are formed in the context of the institution in which teachers work.

Because the staffroom of St. Colman's, rather than subject department, is the location of teacher social networks, it plays a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of perspectives. These perspectives are rooted in the school's organisational culture, which conforms closely to what Hargreaves (1994) describes as 'balkanization'. Balkanization in St. Colman's is identifiable by the existence of seven teacher subgroups, whose physical locations in the staffroom mirror closely the hierarchical

structures of the school, and whose formation can be linked to the school's historical, physical and situational contexts. While teachers brought their distinct biographies, training, socialisation and experience to the workplace, age and gender, shared values, beliefs and experiences built group attachment and affiliations more enduring than department and subject loyalties. Because most teachers teach at least two subjects, sometimes across different disciplines, they have correspondingly more opportunities to build social and professional networks, so most groups would only contain small clusters of teachers from the same subject area. Even teachers of Home Economics, Technology and Music, which have their own distinct departments, are not part of discrete subject based groups, but are members of bigger groups. These teachers' close relationships are forged by their shared beginning in St. Colman's. In this context, while 'Balkanization' is not defined by subject loyalties in the manner suggested by Hargreaves (1994), the groups do, as he claims, have a political complexion.

Teachers see their groups as distinctive entities with which they identify, and around which, they form a consensus on school situations. While strategies are used consciously or instinctively by all groups to promote and defend their interests, a micropolitical culture is most tangible among older and experienced staff, in that they speak the language of micropolitics and interpret situations in the context of their knowledge of the school's institutional history. For most staff, congeniality expressed through story telling and experience swapping is more common than collegiality involving evaluative discussion or feedback on pedagogy and student learning (Little, 1990). In this sense, the staffroom is a 'learning impoverished environment' (Rozenholtz, 1989), where the predominant culture is social or micropolitical rather than professional.

An analysis of the institutional history of the school, intersected with teachers' careers shows that the important micropolitical contexts are the change process, leadership succession, and the principal's style of management. The findings in this case study support Ball's (1987) and Datnow's (1998) claim that conflict is an integral feature of organisational life and micropolitical activity. The data also support their suggestion that change gives rise to power struggles between staff, as groups of teachers seek to defend their ideological and vested interests and assert their definition of the school, in a way that enables them contribute to, or constrain the change process.

An analysis of conflict in this study also highlights the role of a Principal as a 'critical reality definer' (Riseborough, 1981), whose exercise of power can give rise to subterranean conflict, resistance and opposition from some staff who practise particular micropolitical strategies in defence of, or in the pursuit of interests. The type of strategy used is determined by age, gender, career and professional orientation, as teachers increasingly define their roles and identities against the background of changing school structures and patterns of control.

The findings show how delicately balanced micropolitical relationships can be fractured by external episodes which produce 'critical incidents' (Measor, 1985) for teachers and 'social dramas' (Burgess, 1983) that challenge the stability of the organisation. 'Social dramas' demonstrate how teachers can present different and irreconcilable definitions of situations, which continue to inform and legitimize their present perspectives. While the 'dramas' for some teachers crystallized divisions and reinforced their own ideologies, for others, they were critical incidents that challenged their belief system and led to a transferral to other reference groups more in tune with their

substantive identities. Acknowledging the existence of conflict validated it and empowered and politicized many staff in a way that challenged the cultural leadership and management style of the school Principal. It also made explicit the politics of gender and the strategies adopted by male teachers that advance their positions of influence and input into the decision making process.

'Social dramas' are also revelatory about the dilemmas facing Principals in managing conflict at a level that sustains teachers' professional fulfilment and commitment. This study shows that when conflict becomes overly explicit, endemic and personalised around loyalty to the leadership, then it can endanger professional relationships, and that this situation can only be resolved effectively through a change of leadership and a less adversarial style of management.

The findings support existing research by (Ball, 1987; Nias et al., 1989) on the impact of a leadership succession. In St. Colman's, which has had four Principals since 1968, the problems associated with succession were greater when it involved transition to a lay Principal, whose style of leadership altered the power structures, adding to building tensions between teachers and management. The withdrawal of the religious from active leadership in the school also contributed to an uncertainty and misgivings among teachers about the role and powers of a lay Principal vis -a- vis a seemingly growing practice of managerialism (Brehony, 1994) which is most evident in the formalisation of relations between staff and management and in the apparent lack of decision making by staff.

This case study also provides insights into how teachers' ideologies shape their perspectives. For older teachers, these beliefs are embedded in both nostalgic and painful recollections of past events, which act as a framework through which they

assess current situations. Staff meetings of the past are remembered as forums for ideological debate, where teachers aired their views and shaped the school's culture. Meetings are now perceived as wasteful and ineffective, where opinions are not valued and decisions are arrived at through rhetoric rather than ideology, thus impeding their implementation in practice.

These perspectives may be attributable to the assertion by Ball (1987), Hargreaves (1994) and Nias et al. (1989) that long standing but overlooked disagreements can contribute to teachers' inability to reach a consensus or implement decisions. They may also be attributable to a weariness induced by painful memories of earlier conflict, which now inclines teachers to suppress their belief system and adopt survival strategies by non engagement and reduced involvement in the work place. Younger staff believe they have no function in decision making or contesting the given definition of the school, and practise strategies of compliance and ingratiation to protect their interests. The adoption of these diverse strategies means that teachers focus primarily on their own classrooms, which promotes a culture of individualism, mitigated only by the social cohesion teachers experience within their own social networks. Teachers' passivity may be also linked to what Blase (1988b) sees as the vulnerability of teachers to pressures from school Principals and Boards, the constraints to involvement imposed by professional demands on teachers' time and the isolation arising from increased work loads. Although this study did not investigate links between classroom effectiveness and teachers' withdrawal strategies, Ball (1987) and Blase (1988b) suggest that they can undermine a school's ability to achieve high academic standards, because teachers lack a shared culture and mission for the school.

The data in this case study suggests that the school is weak on cultural leadership and that teachers do not identify with the school's stated philosophy or with a dominant culture. The lack of unity within the management team as culture bearers for the school has filtered through to staff, leaving them reliant on their own subcultures for meaning and reaffirmation. The difficulties in developing a dominant culture may also be affected by the increasing demands of administration and public relations on the Principal's time, which Coolahan (1994), Leader and Bolt (1994) and Sykes and Elmore (1989) suggest lead to a neglect of interpersonal relations and instructional leadership. In St. Colman's the middle management structure is also an untapped support system, in that the non involvement of these teachers in decision making has weakened team spirit because they do not identify with their management role and limit their responsibilities to contracted administrative and classroom duties, a situation, Watkins and Wagner (1987) link to a deterioration in school discipline.

Teachers in this case study prefer a style of leadership which is decisive, but which relies on interpersonal skills rather than formal authority to provide moral and professional support to teachers. Their expectations conform closely to 'normative instrumental leadership' (Blase, 1993) which gives limited authority and responsibility to subordinates, but garners teachers' moral involvement because the strategies used by Principals are consistent with teachers' professional norms and values. These perspectives in St. Colman's are located in the traditions of the past, when the religious could exercise moral authority by virtue of their 'community', and their status in society (Clancy, 1983), and the emphasis was on the maintenance of good order, discipline and the preservation of the school's ethos and traditions. These formal structures were bureaucratic, but they provided a negotiated context in which teachers had a role

in shaping the definition of the school. It is possible that lay Principals lack this legitimacy and moral authority. In a situation following an amalgamation of three schools, two of which had religious as Principals, the difficulties under a lay Principal became so problematic, that a D.E.S. inquiry described their effects as constituting a

controversial and morale sapping chapter in the school's history.

(Cullen, 2000, p.6)

The impact of structural changes at a macro and school level is also manifest in teachers' perspectives on professionalism. Older teachers, who once saw teaching as a vocation, now believe, as their younger colleagues do, that teaching does not fit easily into any model of professionalism. They do not equate the extrinsic rewards of teaching with those of the traditional professions of Law or Medicine, but rate themselves against other public service occupations, in comparison to which they see their status and salaries being positioned downwards. These views reflect teachers' opinions nationally, and together with the rapidly declining appeal of teaching as a profession, serve as a context to explain the recent rejection of a pay deal by teachers despite 'teacher bashing' in the media (O'Sullivan, 2000).

The participants in this investigation associate their profession with a conservative image, combined with voluntary service and involvement in the community. In a school context there are perceptible ideological differences between teacher groups on the image the teacher should project and on the nature of teacher pupil relations. While older teachers conform to Mac an Ghail's (1992) 'professionals', others adopt a more relaxed approach in the management of pupils. However, there are

tensions between the ethic of care and that of cognition (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996), and marrying these in a classroom context seems to be problematic. Teachers believe changing societal expectations have made demands on them which are inappropriate to their professional training and purpose. While teachers recognise the complexity of their role, they are frustrated by the emergent identity of the teacher as a gatekeeper for alienated pupils, for whom, increasingly, they must abandon the transmission of a subject based, exam oriented knowledge in favour of defensive teaching within a negotiated classroom environment.

While there is little emphasis on the notion of a scientific knowledge base (Shulman, 1986), teachers do stress the importance of a practical knowledge base and ongoing training in subject related knowledge. Unlike the subject specialists identified in the literature, professional identity is predominantly linked to teaching several subjects. However, teachers do have a preference for a particular subject which best reflects their personal identity and self image. Teaching a subject to Leaving Certificate higher level students is viewed as organisational recognition of professional status, which they link to "good teaching", measured by examination results. Competence and commitment form the yardsticks which teachers use to define their own professionalism. Career fulfillment is fostered by a strong sense of responsibility to pupils, teachers' own enthusiasm for their subjects and the interest engendered in pupils.

However, despite the potential intrinsic rewards, there is a sense that teachers in St. Colman's are suffering from fractured identities and declining morale. Implementing changes such as a new national curriculum has led to an intensification of work, which is not supported by professional development at a national

or school level to enable teachers develop a repertoire of skills to update their craft knowledge. While it could be argued that non intervention strengthens pedagogical autonomy, it increases isolation and individualism at the same time as the Education Act, 1998 envisages greater control and regulation of the profession within a model of professionalism similar to that in Britain (Helsby, 1995 ; Hoyle and John, 1995). These national developments, when viewed alongside diminishing ideological engagement within a school context, make Bascia's (1994) question of teacher as worker or professional more pertinent to teachers in this study.

Helsby (1996), Siskin (1994) and Talbert and McLaughlin (1996) highlight the significance of a department context in developing teachers' sense of professionalism and professional learning. In St. Colman's, department organisation and culture promote equality, but the lack of effective leadership, or ongoing professional debate and development, appraisal and feedback sustains a tradition of individualism, self-reliance and autonomy rather than of collaboration, which Fullan & Hargreaves (1991) and (Hill, 1995) see as a prerequisite of positive change. The position is better for the new curricular initiatives for practical subjects, where timetabled provision for regular monthly meetings facilitates collaboration and co-ordination. However, the data suggests that the legitimacy and funding afforded to these subjects by national agencies have given status and clout to teachers of these programmes, risking potential tensions between the practical and the strictly academic teachers.

This study draws several parallels with the findings by Ball (1987), Siskin (1994) and Sparkes (1987) on how the strength, leadership and unity of a department can determine its status and clout. In the History department, teachers have a good social relationship, but they do not capitalise on their strengths

by acquiring extra resources or promoting the subject's appeal to students. This failure has significance in the context of Beynon's (1985), Gutierrez's (1996) and Lacey's (1970) claim, that the teacher's personality, expertise and levels of classroom control (Denscombe, 1980) can transform a subject's status, giving the department more clout and claim over resources. While falling school enrolment has reduced pupil uptake at senior level, increasingly, pupils opt for more practical, more pupil friendly, less content oriented subjects, advantages which Paechter (1993b) and Paechter and Head (1996a) show can overcome the traditional low status of these subjects.

The History department is also in decline, as more of its teachers are moved out into other subjects, leaving Junior History with teachers whose main subject involvement is primarily as Catechists. The lack of continuity in personnel between Junior and Senior level means an over reliance on Junior level teachers to promote and recruit pupils to Senior level History; a curriculum with which they are unfamiliar. With no staff turnover or new blood recruited in the department in ten years, there is no stimulus for change (Harris, 1998). This contrasts with other departments, such as Technology and the three big departments of Irish, English, Maths where the bulk of new and young teachers are located.

History teachers have a predominantly traditional and authoritarian approach in their attitudes to, and in their relationships with pupils. There is considerable similarity in their pedagogical approaches, which suggests that History has its own subject subculture. The shift towards sources, concepts and skills in Junior Certificate History was intended to give teachers flexibility to pursue an active methodology rather than just imparting information (Callan, 1990). The lack of resources, the impracticality of field trips and pressure of coverage however,

have contributed to a transmission model of teaching geared towards examination requirements. Where there is variation, it stems from experience rather than theory, and reflects teachers' own image of teaching shaped by their own socialisation, biographies and identities (Britzman, 1992; Connolly and Clandinin, 1988; Knowles, 1992; Middleton, 1992; Raymond et al., 1992; Siskin, 1994; Sugrue, 1996; Woods, 1983).

For older History teachers, their training in predominantly political history has influenced their use of political and historical language in their analysis of school situations (Becher, 1989). Their self image as being '*critical*', '*in search of the truth*', '*taking nothing at face value*', once made them vocal and adversarial in their approach to school matters, provoking a high level of ideological debate that harnessed the involvement of other staff and periodically produced conflict in the workplace. History teachers among the '*Smokers*' and '*Music Group*' experienced a different socialisation process and have a politically conservative day to day orientation (Blase, 1988b) in that they never openly challenge the realities of the work place.

Studying History teachers' biographies and locating their careers within a lifecycle framework conveys how the changing contexts of the workplace, the process of ageing and critical incidents shape the adoption of situated identities in the formal context of St. Colman's. While ostensibly, these teachers have adapted to change, their substantial selves surface within informal arenas. They continue to shape and be influenced by the perspectives of their own group subculture, but have diminishing professional significance within the school as they grow older, more detached and their subject loses its place in the subject hierarchy (Ball, 1987; Burgess, 1984b).

St. Colman's is a stuck rather than a moving school (Rosenholtz, 1989) in that teachers' perspectives have not kept

pace with structural changes. Because History teachers rank among the oldest in the school, their career life cycle matches most closely the life cycle of the school itself. The foundations laid in the early nineteen seventies were matched by strong staff enthusiasm and commitment, followed by a period of sustained growth in the nineteen eighties, while the stability of the early nineteen nineties is now giving way to stagnation and decline, reflected in falling pupil numbers, paralleled by an ageing staff, disillusionment and frustration (Huberman,1993).The recent resignation of the current Principal and the succession of an outsider suggest that another era is over and a new cycle may be about to begin.

Chapter Ten

Recommendations

This case study of St. Colman's has presented a range of perspectives based on twenty teachers' ideologies, experiences and behaviour formed over time in a variety of contexts. The salient contexts, identified in the conclusions, which locate, inform but inhibit teachers' perspectives are subcultural fragmentation, ineffective leadership, restricted professionalism and identity crisis.

While these findings are particular to the teachers in this study, they are relevant to all teachers in St. Colman's and have practical implications for other teachers and those in leadership or management positions who work in similar contexts, and who must meet the challenges posed by the impending implementation of the Education Act, 1998. This Act will require teachers to engage in whole school planning, and states that Principals must exercise leadership by providing guidance and professional development for teachers, who will be open to inspection, advice and assistance in employing improved methods of teaching and conducting classes.

Implementing these provisions will require a form of interactive professionalism (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991) necessitating collaborative decision making and discussion of teaching and learning strategies in an open, supportive but reflexive and evaluative manner. Despite fragmentation in St. Colman's, there is evidence, as Hargreaves and Macmillan (1995) suggest, that

school organisations cannot be clearly differentiated into isolated or collaborative cultures, and consensus exists on many issues. From this, the potential of the school's history for developing a shared culture may be realised, in that teachers can identify and take pride in what worked well in the past, and change can be implemented against a background of continuity, empathy and optimism. This process is dependent on cultural leadership in order to build shared goals and a vision for the future.

The Principal of St. Colman's must develop good communication and interpersonal skills, which Bredeson (1987) and Nias et al. (1989) suggest are essential for effective leadership. Meeting each teacher formally and informally on a regular basis to discuss difficulties, give feedback, seek opinions and share perspectives could be a form of professional support leading to 'reflective practice' (Schon, 1983), and build a shared culture that respects and draws on different ideologies. Professional development should not just relate to classroom skills, but to a whole school context and an awareness, as Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) and Hargreaves and Macmillan (1995) suggest, that effective classrooms are an outcome of effective schools. Staff meetings and whole school in-service education strategies that facilitate staff to work in groups, distinct from staffroom social networks, could provide opportunities for teachers to work together, while accepting that disagreement is normal and positive. This is particularly important as St. Colman's moves away from traditional subject areas into new, more practical oriented courses, increasing the potential for inter departmental tension. An interest in and understanding of school culture and micropolitics must be fostered and form part of the socialisation process of new teachers, so that ideological debate is part of active teacher dialogue, rather than viewed as a threat, leading to punitive responses by school authorities. In this type

of learning environment, all staff might participate more fully in the development of school planning and policy making.

This case study also has implications for St. Colman's Board of Management and its relations with teachers. Though Kogan et al. (1984) and Thody (1992/1994) believe that the professional perspective is predominant on Boards, the findings in this investigation would support Curtis's (1994) recommendations that governors must become more aware of day to day activities, to aid effective decision making. Thody (1994) concludes that not sufficient empirical evidence yet exists to make strong correlation between governance and school effectiveness. However, Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) argue that the most effective schools have close ongoing interaction and collaboration between Boards of Management and school staff.

School management could be restructured by delegating more responsibilities to ancillary staff and involving teachers, particularly middle managers, more in decision making. Being free from routine administrative duties would allow the Principal exercise cultural and instructional leadership by having greater visibility within the school and spending more time with teachers. The Principal should be sensitive to the individual teacher's biography and the particular stage in the teacher's life cycle. This is particularly important for staff over forty, whom Sikes (1992) suggests may be disillusioned and resistant to change, yet influential over younger staff. Incentives could be provided to these experienced teachers to develop qualities of leadership, instructional excellence and human resource skills, so that *career is interpreted as a rewarding progression, rather than one of ongoing alienation.*

The subject department in St. Colman's has potential for teachers to invest in their own profession, alongside objective career structures. Existing arrangements for co-ordination

meetings could form the basis for collaboration on resources, staffing, pupils and educational targets. With the Principal's support, teachers could be encouraged to engage in professional discussion that utilizes and builds on existing expertise so that each teacher can develop a concept of the teacher as 'expert practitioner' (Harris, 1998), and the department co-ordinator assumes responsibilities as 'subject leader' (Glover et al., 1998), in a role that promotes professional development through collaboration which is supportive, but respects each teacher's classroom autonomy.

While extra funding may not be forthcoming from Government, existing school resources could be deployed so that each department has its own budget to control the acquisition and deployment of resources, while more thoughtful school timetabling could facilitate regular meetings to discuss pedagogy, pupil learning and progress. Problems of discipline and disruptive pupils could also be addressed in this context and teachers might be better poised to tackle pupil problems in a classroom context, rather than through an over reliance on administrative sanctions.

The greatest challenge facing teachers in St. Colman's relates to classroom performance and appraisal. Under the Education Act, 1998, it is envisaged that observation of teachers in their classroom will become a routine part of whole school evaluation. However, considering the resistance I found to classroom observation, any initial moves in this direction should be gradualistic. School based in-service training which exposes teachers to practices in other schools would be a starting point to build confidence in the effectiveness of teachers' own teaching strategies, while introducing them to innovative methodologies which they could test and shape to suit their own classrooms. Matching this form of in-service training with

effective instructional leadership at school level could open the door to accountability and provide further opportunities for ideological debate about the nature of teaching and the teaching role (Butt et al., 1990).

This case study has made recommendations that can be realistically implemented within existing school structures and can support teachers in the management of their careers. However, this research has not addressed the constraints at a political, social and economic level, that impact on school processes. It is also open to the criticism that it is overly focused on the dark side of organisational life. There is no doubt that another investigation could highlight the positive and innovative dimensions of school life, pupil culture, the qualities of good teaching and its relationship to pupil achievement. This investigation chose to focus on the current concerns of teachers by setting out to understand and present their perspectives in as detached a portrayal as is possible from an inside researcher. While it has not advanced the development or the testing of theory (Hammersley, 1984c), it should, nevertheless, broaden existing interactionist paradigms because it has explored teachers' perspectives within a particular subject area, and located these perspectives in the social, historical, micropolitical, and professional contexts of other teachers and the whole school.

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Appendix 1. Subjects taught by participants.

Oldies.

Researcher:	History, Business Studies.
Martin:	History, Irish.
Jerry:	History, English.
Nick:	History, Geography.
Breda:	History, Religion.
Patrick:	Accountancy, Business Studies.
Sandy:	English, Religion.

Middle Group

Evelyn:	Mathematics, Business Studies, Irish.
Mairead:	Science (interviews through conversation and note taking during interview)

Smokers

Jack:	History, Religion, (interviews through conversation, with brief notes taken and written up later).
Liza:	History, Religion.
Mary:	English, Religion.

Lower Corner

Seamus:	Technology.
Justin:	Mathematics, Business Studies.

Singles

Rose:	Mathematics.
Paula:	Home Economics, (interviews through conversation, with brief notes taken and written up later).

Newcomers

Maura (substitute):	Business Studies, Economics.
Ann:	Geography, French, (interviews through conversation, with brief notes taken and written up later).

Music Group

Elsa: Music, Irish, History.

Paul: Irish, Mathematics, Religion.

Unaffiliated Teachers

(no history of group attachment).

John: English, Irish.

Appendix 2. QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick box, boxes or columns where appropriate.

Q1. County of Birth

Q2. In childhood had you any contact with History at Home?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Type of Primary school you attended

Town School ☐ Country School ☐

Q3. Was History on the curriculum?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q4. What History was emphasised?

Social ☐ Political ☐ Military ☐

Nationalism ☐ Republicanis ☐ Other ☐

Q5. Were teachers

Male ☐ Female ☐ Both ☐ ?

Q6. Any outstanding memory of History at Primary School?

Q7. Rate in order of importance 1,2,3,4. the greatest influence on your interest in History.

Home ☐ Teachers ☐ Community ☐

Other ☐

Q8. What type of Post Primary School did you attend?

Secondary ☐ Comprehensive ☐ Vocational ☐ Community ☐ Other ☐

Q9. Was History a compulsory subject at Junior Level?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Q10. What aspects of History were particularly emphasised?

Political
Social
Economic
Military
Religion/Culture
Nationalism/Republicanism
Revolutionary
Other

Q11. Here are some teaching methods that may have been used in your History lessons. Please tick the columns which best represent the approaches used by your teachers.

Pupil reading aloud from the textbook
Teacher reading aloud from the textbook
Pupils writing out notes and points
Class discussion
Group Work
Teacher talk, storytelling and explanation
Underlining key points in text
Receiving handouts from Teacher
Accessing books in Library
Watching videos
Using pictures/illustrations/wall charts
Doing regular written assignments
Oral questioning in class
Doing study assignments
Visiting historic sites

Q12. Name the Third level College attended.

Q13. State other subjects studied to degree level

Q14. Please encircle which of the following History courses were studied

Modern:-----Irish-----European-----World
 Ancient:-----Irish-----European
 Medieval : -----Irish-----European
 Renaissance / Reformation
 Conquest and Colonisation
 Revolutionary Ireland
 Revolutionary Europe
 Historical Research
 The Theory of History
 Other.

Q15. Was History part of your Degree/Higher Diploma in Education?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Q16. If so, what teaching strategies were recommended?

Q17. Did any of the following teaching /learning theorists feature on your course?

Pavlov Piaget Bruner Vygotsky Others
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Would you consider the H. Diploma to be useful to you as a new teacher?

Always Sometimes Never
☐ ☐ ☐

Give reasons, if possible.

Q18.Here are some teaching strategies you may use in teaching Junior Certificate History. Please put a tick in the column which best represents your approach.

Teaching strategies	Always	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never
Pupil reading aloud from textbook				
Teacher reading aloud from textbook				
Pupils writing out notes and points				
Class discussion				
Group work				
Teacher talk, story telling and explanation				
Underlining key points				
Receiving handouts from teacher				
Oral questioning in class				
Watching videos				
Using pictures/illustrations/wall charts				
Doing regular written assignments				
Accessing books in library				
Visiting historic sites				
Visits from historians				

Q19. Do you share History resources with your colleagues?

Always Occasionally Never

☐ ☐ ☐

Q20.Are these resources provided mainly by the School Office Principal Board of Management By Yourself?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Q21. List the resources available to you in your classroom
e.g., Library, video, maps, tapes, books, assignment sheets, etc.

Q22. Would you consider these resources

Very adequate Satisfactory Inadequate?

☐ ☐ ☐

Q23. Do you discuss teaching strategies in History with your colleagues?

Regularly Occasionally Never

☐ ☐ ☐

Q24. Have you engaged in professional development through

In-service training for introduction of Junior Cert History
Post graduate studies in Education
Postgraduate studies in a Subject area
Other?

Q25. Was course provided by

The Dept Of Education
By your school
Organised and funded by yourself
Other?

Q26. Are you a member of

The Historical Society
The History Teachers Association
Association of another Subject eg Geography/Maths?

Q27. Do you participate in History related activities?

	Regularly	Seldom	Never
Attend History teachers' Conference			
Attend History Seminars			
Read Journals on History Teaching			
Read New Publications in History			
Organisation of History Competition			
Other activities			

Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. These questions will be explored further with you during interviews.

Yours sincerely,
